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THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN FINANCING EDUCATION UNDER THE DEVOLUTION POLICY IN GHANA

BY

JOSEPH O. MANKOE ©

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING 1996

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled: THE ROLE OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN FINANCING EDUCATION UNDER THE DEVOLUTION POLICY IN GHANA submitted by Joseph O. Mankoe in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

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Kevin A. Wilson, External Examiner

Date: January 19, 1996

DEDICATION

To My Mother, Nana Aba Tsetsewa

My mother

Who sat and watched my infant head,
When sleeping on my cradle bed,
And tears of sweet affection shed,
My mother.

When pain and sickness made me cry,
Who thought upon my heavy eye,
And wept for fear that I should die
My mother

Who taught my infant lips to pray,
And loved God's Holy Book and prayed,
And walked in wisdom's pleasant way,
My mother.

And can I ever cease to be
Affectionate and kind to thee
Who was so kind to me
My mother?

Ah, no! The thought I cannot bear
And if God pleases my life to spare
I hope I shall reward thy care
My mother.

When thou art feeble, old and grey,
My healthy arm shall be they stay,
And I shall soothe thy pains away,
My mother.

Author unknown

ABSTRACT

The study examined the roles of the Central Government and the local communities in financing basic and secondary education as a function of the devolution policy in Ghana. To achieve the objective of the study, current administrative procedures under which the Central Government, local communities and non-government organizations are providing resources were examined. One major assumption underlying the study was that events and their relationships perceived to be real by key actors in institutional settings are real in their consequences for the institution and its stakeholders. The field component of the study was undertaken in Ghana from May through August, 1994. The up-to-date ideas held by 51 participants, including key policy makers, educational planners and analysts, administrators and stakeholders at the national, regional, district, and school levels were tapped through tape-recorded interviews.

Findings of the study indicated that the devolution policy, initiated by the Central Government, was endorsed by administrators at all administrative levels. The intended benefits such as generating more resources for national development have, however, not been realized. The overall result is that local communities still look up to the Central Government for many educational resources. Decision-making authority was supposed to have been conferred on the communities by virtue of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) Law 207 of 1988. However, local administrators, including the district assemblies, did not possess the requisite decision-making authority, particularly for major financial decisions. Senior civil servants at the national headquarters perceived the devolution of decision-making authority as a threat to their influence, privileges and prestige. Therefore, virtually all major financial and educational decisions were still made centrally.

The largest item of educational expenditure is salaries of all education personnel for which the Government has assumed full responsibility. For example, the Government allocated 40 percent of the 1994 national budget to education. Out of this allocation, 80 percent was taken by salaries alone. Thus only 20 percent was left for capital expenditure, giving the impression that the Government was not providing adequately for education. Five major factors were identified as affecting the resource flow to basic and secondary education. These are (1) general economic constraints are a major obstacle facing the government as a major provider of education; (2) the Government's economic policies and the district assemblies' expenditure patterns have a negative impact on the communities; (3) poverty and lack of commitment on the part of community members affect their ability to contribute to education; (4) there are no partnerships among the various institutions that

have a stake in education; and (5) the policy of privatization encourages private individuals and organizations to provide education.

Various organizations contributing resources to education are the district assemblies, local communities, parent-teacher associations, individual schools, foreign agencies (loans and grants), private groups and individuals. The Central Government provides the bulk of educational resources. Through various strategies, the assemblies provide limited assistance in the provision of school buildings, workshops and bursaries. Parent-Teacher Associations are very effective in providing assistance of various types to their respective schools. The communities provide assistance in the form of communal labour and levies. International organizations such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, the African Development Bank, and Overseas Development Agency are also providing loans and grants.

There is a need to ensure accountability in the use of funds, ensure cost-effectiveness of education, remove all weaknesses in financial practices, and to ensure that schools are provided in all communities. The establishment of a District Endowment Fund is a viable option. Local administrators need the authority to make and implement financial decisions and be accountable to them.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

There is, in every society, an interest in the kind of knowledge that will expand control over nature and improve the lot of human beings. Similarly, there is always an interest in the kind of communication necessary for the understanding of traditions, institutions, and those who are different in some manner.

Greene (1994, p. 441)

Developing countries are beset with fragile economies. Hence governments are generally incapable of funding education single-handedly. This circumstance exists at a time when citizens expect governments to shoulder the financial burden, or at best, bear the larger portion of the burden. The situation, therefore, calls for a redefinition of the sharing of financial responsibility for education between the central governments and local communities. For several developing countries, this redefinition has included a move toward a policy of financial decentralization. This move has a variety of implications for the provision of education.

For the purposes of this study, decentralization is defined as a systematic devolution of decision making power in education from the national headquarters through the administrative hierarchy to the community level. This makes the individual school principal together with a School Council the basic decision making unit. The School Council, as suggested by Brown (1990, p. 168), Rondinelli, Middleton and Verspoor (1990, p. 99), and Johnson (1991, p. 7), is a representative body of the school and community. Its membership consists of the principal, teachers, support staff, parents, citizens and students where possible.

Bray (1984, p. 115) pointed out that the philosophy proclaimed by the 1974 Constitutional Planning Committee of Papua New Guinea was that:

> Power must be returned to the people. Decisions should be made by the people to whom the issues at stake are meaningful, easily understood and relevant. The existing system of government should therefore be restructured and power should be decentralized so that energies and aspirations of our people can play their full part in promoting our country's development.

In education, Eghan and Odum (1989) observed that decentralization involves a redistribution of responsibility and authority in choice making for delivering education in ways which make the participants accountable for their contribution or non-contribution for total educational delivery.

In many developing countries, the provision of basic education has been perceived as a responsibility of the government. In an era when it has become clear that the central government cannot shoulder this responsibility alone, it seems a sound economic policy to call upon the citizens at the local communities to bear part of the responsibility. Care must be taken, however, not to overburden the communities. There is the need, therefore, to re-examine and redefine the roles of the central government and the local communities. One strategy to address this major concern is a clear formulation of a policy of financial decentralization which includes: (1) allocating funds from national levels to sub-national levels to use according to their priorities, and (2) giving the sub-national levels appropriate powers to raise their own additional finances to use in accordance with their own priorities (Eghan & Odum, 1989). This policy implies a style of governance of education which emphasizes definite, realizable results, results that must be achieved with minimum waste and effort.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the roles of the Central Government and local communities in the provision of educational resources under the devolution policy in Ghana. It examined the issue of sharing educational financing between the Central Government and the local communities. In a previous study (Mankoe, 1992), it was found that there was no financial decentralization in Ghana's decentralized school system and that this limitation posed a major stumbling block in the provision of adequate educational resources (finance and materials) in the new educational system in Ghana. The review of the literature indicated that the issue is also a persistent problem in many other developing countries (World Bank, 1983; Yannakopoulos, 1980; & Tilak, 1989). The purpose of the study, therefore, was to examine the current financial practices in the provision of basic and secondary education in Ghana. Specifically the study intended (1) to examine the role being played by central government and the local communities in that regard, (2) to examine the outcomes of these policy practices and (3) to identify the possible problems. One goal was to propose measures to clarify the roles between the Central Government and the local communities in their strenuous attempts at providing more effective and efficient services for pre-university education in Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

General Research Question

The study sought to address the following general problem:

What should be the salient features of a workable policy under which the Central Government and the local communities are able to provide adequate resources (money and materials) for basic and secondary education in the decentralized school system in Ghana?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

1. What are the perceptions of policy makers, administrators and stakeholders of the policy under which money and other resources are allocated to schools under the devolution policy?
2. In Ghana, how are decisions affecting educational resources made -- between the Central Government and the local communities? Who decides on what?
3. What are the major items of expenditure in the provision of basic and secondary education? Between the Central Government and the local communities, who provides what?
4. What are the factors affecting resource flow to basic and secondary education?
5. If local communities are expected to contribute financially towards education, what percentage of the education budget can be borne by them?
6. What contributions are the various partners currently making to education?
7. What are some of the strategies to increase resources for basic and secondary education?
8. What have been the outcomes of the efforts made at providing more resources for education?
9. What issues are involved when the responsibility for providing funds is devolved to the local community?
10. Based on the analysis of participants' responses, what policy initiatives or alternatives could be proposed?

Significance of the Study

One major consideration in the provision of public education in a developing country is a suitable finance policy instrument under which educational resources are allocated. Schiefelbein (1983) suggested that the selection of mechanisms may affect the quantity and quality of education as well as the distributive effects, rated innovations, efficiency, and sources of support for education. Moreover, the sources of financing such as different types of taxes, fees, and donations and the method of fund allocation have important implications for the outcomes of educational systems. Therefore, it is crucial for policy makers and planners to consider carefully the goals and objectives of the society and its resource capabilities and consequently decide on the appropriate mechanisms to be used in providing resources for education. As Thapa (1993) noted

> Social, economic and political circumstances are changing rapidly in the whole world. The ideas and philosophies behind financing education are also changing. Even the role of education in education and social development has been questioned. In this context, developing countries are re-examining their financial practices in education. Several countries are trying to devise appropriate strategies to cope with the situation without hampering their philosophical stands on education and educational financing. This is a challenging task. (p. v)

In the challenging task of reformulating policies on educational financing, a critical analysis and understanding of the role played by the Central Government as well as the local communities as co-partners are important in the attempts at removing possible conflicts or ambiguities in the mobilization and provision of scarce resources for effective and efficient delivery of education in a developing country.

In a recent study conducted in Ghana (Mankoe, 1992), it was evident that one major bottleneck in the implementation of a decentralized educational policy related to the provision of educational resources. Many issues related to the educational system impinged on finance. There were no clear procedures for involving the community which was a major objective of the policy. A Budget Officer in charge of a district's financial planning pointed out that there was no financial decentralization under the decentralized educational system. This means that all major financial decisions were still made at the national headquarters rather than at the local level. The situation slowed down educational progress. And, as is evident in the literature, the situation is not peculiar to Ghana. It is true in many other developing countries as well (Aminu, 1990; and Yannakopoulos, 1980). This suggests that there is no clear role division between the government and the community on the question of educational financing.

In Ghana the community appeared to rely on the central government for educational finance. At the same time it was obvious that funds from the government were inadequate, indicating that the community should supplement. It also appeared as if the community was not fully aware of its expected role in financing education. This critical situation raises a number of questions regarding the role of (a) the government, and (b) the community in financing education under a decentralized policy. It raises doubts about the people's understanding of the roles played by these two institutions. The contention is that, if the community was aware of its expected role, probably it would feel more committed to finding the money to play its role. Then some of the resources that are now lacking would probably be there. This situation therefore called for an in-depth study involving government officials, key stakeholders and policy makers.

Hence, a description of events and their consequences as they unfolded in Ghana with respect to strategies adopted in mobilizing resources for basic education as well as their implications for a developing country is one significant contribution of the study. Through the field study in Ghana and an in-depth review of the literature, the study has attempted to draw inferences as to how the Central Government might utilize financial decentralization to provide quality educational service to its citizens.

It is hoped that the study will contribute towards improving the people's awareness of and their commitment to pay for education, bearing in mind their socio-economic circumstances. The study involved top policy makers within Government circles, hence an attempt has been made to determine the extent to which the Government is able to allocate sufficient funds to education as a top priority. On the basis of such knowledge, the formulation of a more sound financial policy for education might be attempted. The study is therefore deemed to be valuable to educational planners, top administrators, and policy and financial analysts in developing countries. The study is significant also to stakeholders of basic and secondary education, including regional, district and school-based administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders.

Finally, the study could be useful to a number of international organizations such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States of America International Development (USAID), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). These organizations, have been involved in the progress of developing countries, including Ghana, for decades. They have been preoccupied in finding solutions to educational, economic, and health problems facing these countries (World Bank Report, 1983). In spite of their significant attempts to help solve these problems, developing countries are still beset with educational and other problems. The study aimed at helping find solutions to some of these problems.

Definition of Terms

Basic Education -- The first nine years of education consisting of six years primary and three years junior secondary school (J.S.S.), free and compulsory for all children aged between 6 and 15 years. It is supposed to be terminal, but may be continuing for many J.S.S. graduates. This level of education is the minimum compulsory for every citizen to attain.

Cedi -- The national currency of Ghana. One *cedi* is equivalent to one hundred *pesewas*. Exchange rate of the cedi (¢) as at Monday, January 15, 1996:

$1 Canadian = ¢1064.30
$1 USA = ¢1450.00
Source: *Globe and Mail,* Monday, January 15, 1996, p. B 10.

Central Government -- national government of officials, usually but not always elected, holding portfolios within the various sectors of the governing machinery. It may be unitary national government (e.g. Ghana) or a federal system of government to which the state or provincial governments are accountable (e.g. Nigeria).

Centralization -- A policy that seeks to "fix" responsibility and give power only to those "qualified" to run the school systems (Hatton, 1979). Morgan (1986, p. 26) describes a centralized organization as a Scalar chain: a line of authority from superior to subordinate, which runs from the top to bottom of the organization. This chain which results from the unity-of-command principle, is used as a channel for communication and decision-making. He notes that centralization of authority, always present in some degree, must vary to optimize the use of faculties of personnel.

Composite Budgeting -- a financial policy that requires each of the decentralized departments within a district to prepare annual budget estimates. The district budget officer then collects these budget estimates and submits them to the regional budget officer who collects and collates them for onward submission to the Ministry of Finance. The district departments receive their government grants through the district treasury.

Decentralization -- The reversal of administrative power concentration at a single centre by the dispersal of that power from an institution to subordinate levels in a territorial hierarchy (Aryeetey, et al. (1988). It may be political or organizational/administrative. Decentralization in education involves a redistribution of responsibility and authority in choice-making for delivering education in ways which make the participants accountable for their contribution or non-contribution for total educational delivery.

Gittell (1979, p. 60) observed that administrative decentralization means a shuffling of the bureaucratic and professional staff to provide for a more direct field contact, which may involve the creation of field titles. Political decentralization, on the other hand, requires a shift in power from professionals to the community.

Devolution -- a policy under which administrative powers are most firmly decentralized. Decision-making powers are formally transferred from a central administration to local bodies, a process which involves the strengthening of sub-national units of governments such as states, provinces or municipalities.

Financial Decentralization -- (1) The allocation of funds by the central government to sub-national levels to use according to their priorities; and (2) giving the sub-national levels appropriate powers to raise their own finances and use them in accordance with their own priorities.

First Cycle Institutions -- charged with the provision of basic education, first cycle institutions comprise the first nine years of schooling: six years primary and three years junior secondary. Basic education is free and compulsory for all children aged normally between 6 and 15 years.

Ghana -- An English-speaking West African country with an area of 92,100 square-miles, and a population of 16 million. As a former British Colony, it was the first African country to achieve political independence on March 6, 1957.

Headteacher/Headmaster -- Headteacher is a term used for the head of a primary school or the former middle school. Headmaster is the head of a junior or senior secondary school. A principal is the head of a college which may be a teacher training college or a university college.

Implementation -- According to Adams (1991, p. 15) implementation is the execution of a plan as the plan directs. It is a stage in a linear process of change, following plan formulation and preceding evaluation. Evaluation results may serve as feed back to modify implementation activities, or as input to future planning, but typically do not serve to alter the plan itself.

Local Community -- a society (rural or urban) with the citizens relatively homogeneous in language, life style and values. In a modern urbanized society, a local community may be made of a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups living in a city. A number of such societies may form a local council or a district within the boundaries of one district, ethnic or socio-political entity.

Participation -- A social-political perspective when negotiation creates opportunities for increased communication among people who define what the organization is and should be. It is a means of facilitating the development of mutual understanding and shared meaning of events and activities. Planning can occur when various participants understand and share constitutive meaning (Hamilton, 1991).

Policy -- Heclo (1972) defined policy as a course of action or inaction intended to accomplish some end rather than specific decisions or actions. From the concept, Bullock, Anderson, and Brady (1983) stated *inter alia:*

- Policy is a goal oriented behavior.
- Policy consists of a course of action -- not independent decisions made by government officials.
- Policies are actions of governments, which may be different from what governments say they do.
- Policy is directional (positive or negative). Positive policy indicates that a government has decided to solve a problem, while negative policy means that government does nothing to resolve the issue.

Resources -- Fiscal allocation from national, local and external sources. Such fiscal allocation, in turn, provides qualified personnel (human resources) and material resources including educational infrastructure such as furnished classroom, library, laboratory, tools workshop, and staff accommodation. They also include learning materials such as textbooks, stationery, equipment, audio-visual aids. As well resources include welfare services such as means of transport, medical care, and catering.

Secondary Education -- The current structure of secondary education embraces a three-year junior secondary, and a three-year senior secondary that primarily prepares students for tertiary institutions.

Second Cycle Institutions -- consist of all institutions that provide various types of educational programs following primary and junior secondary (basic) education. Second cycle institutions include senior secondary, commercial, technical and vocational schools and colleges. The duration of education in these institutions range between three and five years.

Sub-Saharan Africa -- Includes the countries lying south of the Sahara Desert which covers most of the northern half of the African continent. It includes all East African countries such as the Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda and West African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Togo, Senegal and Guinea.

Stakeholders -- A set of people (individually or a group) whose actions and opinions can positively or adversely affect an organization. They are claimants on an organization's effectiveness. They include individual actors, organized groups, professions, an institution that can claim part of the organization's attention, or output, or that can affect or are affected by the achievement of its policies or mission (Bryson & Roering, 1987).

Assumptions

The following assumptions guided the study:

1. Multi-site descriptive and analytic studies and content analysis of a range of data provide an insightful and meaningful understanding of the policy of educational financing within the context of decentralization being implemented in Ghana; i.e. the study will tap ideas from various sources for analysis which will provide information required to address the basic research problem.
2. The insights and concepts developed in policy implementation in other developing countries will be useful in guiding this Ghanaian study.
3. The participants in the study will possess some information on the operation of the decentralized educational policy, particularly as it relates to financing of public education at the elementary level.
4. Participants will be willing to share their knowledge, and concerns, if any, and that they will do so in a forthright manner.
5. Events and relationships perceived to be real by key actors in institutional settings are real in their consequences for the institution and its stakeholders. Hence, it is crucial to attend to "personal meaning", and attain a deep understanding of the

meanings that the individuals attribute to the processes of providing resources for basic education.

Limitations and Delimitations

1. The scope of the study was delimited to a number of participant groups comprising government officials, policy makers, administrators, and stakeholders including national headquarters directors, regional and district directors of education, school principals, teachers, parents and community leaders; the experience of each group and individuals was assumed to be quite different from others in some instances.

2. Purposive sampling was done to select a sample from the various parts of three political and administrative regions of Ghana. Eight political and administrative districts were selected from the three administrative regions; hence findings from the different participants at different locations may not reflect the experience of the wider system.

3. The study was delimited, for the most part, to obtaining information relevant to the operation of the system as well as making appropriate recommendations towards formulation of decentralized financial policy in education; therefore, other emergent data reflecting the impact of other factors might not have received full attention during data collection and analysis.

4. Data collection was delimited to the research period from May to August, 1994; hence, findings reflect the perceptions of the respondents for the period only and may change at other times.

5. The external factors such as national, regional, local and school fiscal restraints, might have had stronger impacts that overshadowed other elements of interest in the study.

6. The applicability of findings and insights from this case study (Ghana) to other developing countries is limited by the particular nature of the study.

Research Design and Methodology

The focus of the study -- the roles of the central government and local communities in financing education under a devolution policy in Ghana -- demanded first, an extensive field study. These roles were assumed to be current and on-going by the researcher. Therefore, one objective of the study was that of "tapping" up-to-date ideas held by key policy makers and policy analysts, educational planners and analysts, administrators and stakeholders at the national and local levels. Second, the study demanded a close examination of relevant policy documents related to education finance that were available to the public. Finally the study required an in-depth review of the literature related to educational practices in African, Asian and Latin American countries in order to identify, synthesize and clarify current practices in these countries.

The purpose of this study is to understand and provide a detailed description and critical analysis of the recent past and, more importantly, the present trends in the provision of funds and materials for education. To this end the study was qualitative, and as such, involved field interviews. The review of the literature provided an opportunity to compare similarities and differences in the current educational financial practices among various countries and to draw important inferences from them.

This was a case study of one developing country, namely, Ghana in West Africa. As such, the study focused on the incidents, interactions of individual participants, and the contextual variables of the single case.

The types of data required to address the research questions included educational and financial plans and policies of different developing countries together with their socio-economic and political contexts, recent and current trends and issues related to financing education. The data also included general theoretical perspectives on educational financing as well as the strategies for coping with the economic crisis in education adopted by different countries or ideas imported from funding international organizations and foreign expertise.

The perceptions and opinions of key actors in the provision of education of the existing educational policies and practices in Ghana formed a major component of the data.

An in-depth literature review was undertaken to identify some of the current practices in a number of African, Asian and Latin American countries. The literature included books, monographs, anthologies, research reports, reviews, journals and dissertations. Furthermore, research reports and case studies published by individual researchers, institutions and international agencies and journal articles were other important sources of data. Educational plans as well as developmental plans of developing countries available in libraries and selected data bases formed other major sources of data for the study. International yearbooks of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and World Bank Development Reports were also examined. Seminar and workshop reports on the topic by agencies such as UNESCO, and World Bank, the International Institute for

Educational Planning (IIEP), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) were closely examined.

The Sample

Interviews were a major source of data. The informants included (1) key policy makers and senior educational administrators at both national and sub-national levels, and (2) key stakeholders at the sub-national levels such as headmasters, teachers, parents, and citizens including chiefs and other community leaders. Other sources of data included relevant official documents. The literature was used to clarify the current state of information about how a developing country could analyze its own political, and socio-economic situation and draw appropriate policy guidelines to facilitate the success of financial decentralization.

The Public Administration Restructuring and Development Implementation Committee (PARDIC), the Ministries of Education and Culture; and Finance and Economic Planning were included in the study. Other respondents were regional and district budget officers, and a public relations officer. Other respondents included representatives of the Director General of the Ghana Education Service, regional directors of education, district directors of education, director of planning and manpower, a number of headmasters and teachers of selected elementary, junior and senior secondary schools. The rest of the informants were parents, community leaders and citizens, and university administrators.

Bearing in mind the financial and time constraints, the field study involved an in-depth study in three administrative regions in Ghana, viz: Central, Western and Greater Accra Regions. A number of districts were selected from each of the three regions. A number of policy makers in Accra, the national headquarters, located in the Greater Accra Region were involved in the study. With respect to local informants, proximity to and availability of secondary and elementary schools was a deciding factor. Purposive sampling was used to select the informants.

The sample for the field component of the study is as follows:

Ministry of Education and Culture (Headquarters)	2
Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning	2
Ghana Education Service (Headquarters)	5
District Administration	2
Regional/District Budget Office	2
Regional Directorate of Education	5
District Directorates of Education	6
District Assembly	2
Headmasters	8
Parent-Teacher Association	6
Teachers	6
Parents/Community Leaders	3
University Administration (Legon and Cape Coast)	2
TOTAL	**51**

Data Analysis

A number of procedures were followed to organize and analyze the information obtained from the field and from the review of the literature.

Organization of the literature review: Each relevant document was read carefully. Key ideas were then recorded on 5" x 8" index cards. After covering some key ideas from books, articles, reports, and documents, an outline of the report was prepared.

Content Analysis of the field data:

The purpose of qualitative content analysis is to find meaning from all the data collected (Merriam & Simpson, 1984). The approach suggested by these authors was applied to the analysis of the interview data which was a major source of data in the study. The first step in the data analysis was open coding. In this approach, four basic guidelines suggested by Strauss, cited in Berg (1989), were followed. The issues addressed by these guidelines are: (a) asking a specific and consistent set of questions such as what problems are the data pertinent to; (b) analyzing the data minutely in the initial coding procedure; (c) writing theoretical notes frequently while coding because such a process leads to grounded theory; and (d) accepting the analytical relevance of traditional variables only when indicated by the data. The open coding was followed by axial coding which involved coding categories around major themes of the study. That stage was followed by an analytical induction process which leads researchers to go out of their way to look for negative evidence. As noted by Berg (1989), the analytical induction process, therefore, helps to combine analysis of data with integration of theory.

Hence, the main steps for identifying major issues in financial decentralization for effective and efficient delivery of education in Ghana and other developing countries were:

- open coding of data;
- categorization of data;
- emergence of major themes on the basis of axial coding;
- development of trial themes;
- search for negative theme, if any;
- examining all relevant cases from the data before determining findings, relationships and patterns.

Authenticating Validity and Reliability

In measuring information for any purpose, a researcher must be concerned with whether the measurement process results in classifications or scores that accurately represent the characteristic being measured (Eichelberger, 1989). When anyone is concerned with obtaining the best information for answering a question, two fundamental questions must be answered. The first question is: "What are the best sources of such information?" These sources may be books, or journals, or they may be particular people, such as teachers, students, parents, administrators, or school board members. The second question is: How can I assure the highest quality of the information (data) that is gathered? These concerns address the issues of *validity* and *reliability*. While validity addresses the extent to which a measurement process measures what is intended to measure, reliability is concerned with the consistency of results when using that process.

In this regard, construct validity, internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity were my primary concerns. As Eichelberger (1989) noted, documenting validity in research is essentially gathering and analyzing relevant evidence concerning the degree to which the construct is being measured. The researcher referred points not clear to him including inaccuracies, errors, omissions, and inclusions to the individual respondents concerned for clarification. Patterns of relationships between responses of various categories of participants were identified during the analysis. A number variables or relationships among the issues raised by participants were studied to assess the weight of evidence which supported the study findings and conclusions.

Adams (1993, p. 16) postulated that while internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity authenticate conventional quantitative research, these criteria are also considered in qualitative research but assume different incarnations. Furthermore, authenticity criteria in research favours a hermeneutic methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 233). Thus the validity of this study was assured because I considered multiple perspectives and realities (Buber, 1970; Greene, 1978) in the data collection, the interpretation, and the writing.

First, in the process of collecting the data, credibility paralleled internal validity. The extent to which my data interpretations was perceived as accurate by the participants involved in the study was used as indication of credibility. Through the use of participant checks, the match between the events as experienced by different categories of participants and my representation of those experiences was ensured.

Second, transferability paralleled external validity or generalizability. Transferability is the degree to which, and the conditions under which readers are able to transfer the study findings to their own circumstances and experiences. Guba and Lincoln (1985, p. 124) noted that transferability is the "fitness, the degree of congruence between sending and receiving." I checked my perceptions and verified events that happened within and between different national, regional, and district directorates of education, individual schools and local communities in Ghana. A detailed description of a study contributes to its transferability (Janesick, 1982). This description was applied to this study. Consequently, as Rutherford, cited in Humbert (1995, p. 15) observed, I anticipate that readers of the study findings will find themselves nodding in understanding, and may be able to say "Yes, that makes sense. That fits the reality I know. I am willing to accept that conclusion." Readers may, of course, view their own situations in a different light.

Third, dependability paralleled reliability. Dependability refers to the extent to which one's findings could be replicated. Would another individual reach the same or similar conclusions and develop similar themes from the data (Humbert, 1995)? In this research, I had to ensure my dependability and ability to carry out the research, description, interpretation, and writing, so that the research had credibility and accuracy. As already noted, the participants were approached to clarify, or add to any issue that was not clear to the researcher during the initial interview.

Finally, confirmability replaced objectivity. The criterion for establishing confirmability is the extent to which the characteristics of the data in the study are confirmable with other sources (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, p. 130). The multiple texts and interpreters of this study included the official documents of the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service, and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning that were accessible to the researcher; the views of top officials, stakeholders and their situations, the data collected and the transcripts, and tentative conceptualizations, the written text, and me (as the researcher). I ensured that the interpretations and findings of the study were, in fact, rooted in the data. Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 243) pointed out that "the logic used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit in the narrative of a case study." This was confirmed by participants who were approached with a number of interpretations during the data collection in Ghana. For example, major educational policy issues raised by some stakeholder groups while expressing their views, were raised in subsequent interviews with other participants for their views as well.

Inasmuch as the study findings have been reported in a straightforward manner without removing the warts or contradictions, they should have the ring of truth and conviction. Johnson (1989) concurs with this approach when he cautions against writing with an artificial unity that ignores the tensions, gaps, and disharmonies within our lives. According to Johnson

> One hedge against this tendency to oversimplify, overunify and falsify one's understanding is to seek out multiple texts and interpreters. Multiple narratives make it possible for us to go beyond, and around the text, to research it without accusing it of false consciousness, on the one hand, or succumbing to its rationale on the other. (p. 375)

There were interactions with my reflections, the data, the "shaped data" and the written text. An in-depth review of participants' interview responses from persons deemed to possess the requisite information were made. These issues, to a very large extent, authenticate the validity and reliabily of this research.

Ethical Issues

In order to protect the participants in the study, the following procedures were adopted:

1. The policy implementation process is formed and constructed by the perceptions and meanings of the persons involved as actors in the policy system. This shared experience formed the raw data for the field study.
2. Approval for the research was sought from the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Administration (now Department of Educational Policy Studies).
3. The study's purpose and process were clearly explained to the participants prior to gaining access to them. The explanation letter in addition to a review of these protocols at the initial stage of the interviews ensured that the participants had consented with full understanding of the research.
4. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time, either completely or partially if certain information or views were deemed, upon reflection, to have been inappropriately contributed during discussion with the researcher.
5. Participants who initially agreed to participate in the study, but later showed reluctance for whatever reason, were permitted to withdraw entirely from the study.
6. Each tape-recorded interview was played back on the evenings following the interview to ensure that the researcher understood all issues raised by respondents. Wherever necessary, the researcher referred points not clear to him including inaccuracies, errors, omissions, and inclusions to the respondent concerned for clarification.
7. All information collected during the research was treated as confidential. There was complete anonymity in the sense that the data collected were reported in aggregate form rather than individually.
8. All transcribing of audio-taped interviews was completed by the researcher.
9. Data, whether in the form of audio tapes, field notes, transcripts, or documents, have been kept in a secure location to which the researcher only has access.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into nine chapters. Chapter one presents an overview of the study. The overview explains the purpose, the problem and the significance of the study. The chapter also describes the research design and methodology as well as the assumptions, limitations and delimitations that guided the study. The two-part review of the literature is presented in chapters two and three. Part one of the review focuses on the issues involved in sharing public education costs between the central government and local communities in a number of developing countries. Part two of the review examines the trends in policy formulation, implementation and outcomes related to pre-university education in Ghana. Chapters 4 to 7 are devoted to presentation and analysis of the interview data related to the specific research questions. In this connection, chapter four presents data on the pursuit of the devolution policy. Chapter five presents data on the contributions being made by various partners in the provision of educational resources. Chapter six focuses on the data related to the accessibility and utilization of resources for educational programs, while chapter seven presents data on the assessment of the quality of Ghana's educational reforms. Chapter eight is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the data presented in the previous four chapters. The final chapter, nine, offers conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study. The chapter then makes suggestions for further research that might provide more answers to the basic research question.

CHAPTER TWO

SHARING PUBLIC EDUCATION COST BETWEEN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE I

If schooling [is] to be provided for all children, then all must attend. If all must attend then there is a public purpose to be attained. If a public purpose, then a public expense.

T. E. Giles & A. J. Proudfoot (1994, p. 81)

This chapter deals with the first part of a two-part review of the literature. The discussion in this part focuses on a number of fundamental issues regarding education finance. It considers the policy of financial decentralization and the on-going debate between centralization and decentralization. Next, it examines the impact which each of these policies has on the provision of educational resources as a shared responsibility between the central government and local communities. To illustrate the arguments, strategies being adopted in some developing countries are examined. The practices in these countries point to some of the economic constraints facing them, particularly in the provision of primary and secondary education. Some of the possible solutions for addressing these constraints are then considered. In the effective use of resources, the policy of school-based management, its rationale, and what it promises are considered. Finally, the pros and cons of private schooling are examined. These notions provided the required background within which the study was designed and undertaken.

Introduction

The processes for the provision of educational resources differ from one developing country to another. Our thinking about resources is dominated by concepts from economics. When we think or talk about resources for education, we are most often talking about money, and school budgets are cast in terms of money and the resources -- staff and facilities -- that money buys (Levin, 1994). While Levin calls on educators and policy makers to adopt a broader concept of resources, money is still perceived as a major educational resource in many countries. In many cases, as Ghafoor (1982, p. i) pointed out:

> There is a general impression among educators that in the wake of quantitative expansion, qualitative improvement is set aside. Quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement go side by side and cannot be isolated from each other. The efficiency of the educational system will not be impaired provided the best use

is made of the limited resources available to carry out this expansion and improvement.

Thapa (1993) also noted that developing countries adopt different mechanisms for financing their educational systems, and most of these mechanisms depend upon the administrative systems in the countries, especially the educational sector. Thapa noted that if a country follows a purely centralized system of administration, then all the monies going into education flow from the central government. But what happens if a country needs more money to finance education than the government is able to provide? If this situation exists, then there is a need for a policy within which the government may formally obtain inputs from the local communities. Taxation is one such policy. In that situation, as Thapa (1993) pointed out, the government may be required to institute a policy that may allow some level of public participation in administrative decision-making process in the education sector. This policy now seems to have been put in place in many developing countries (Mankoe, 1992; World Bank, 1988; Padmanabhad, 1984; Bray, 1985).

The current practices in some developing countries, for example, Papua New Guinea (Bray, 1984), are that the Ministry of Education provides funds for basic education supported by additional funding from local governments. Yannakopulos (1980) observed that there are different practices between the central government and the local communities in a number of Latin America and Asian countries under a policy of decentralization in their educational systems.

The Policy of Educational Decentralization Defined

Educational decentralization is a process of ensuring wider representation of legitimate interests in education (Weiler, 1990). Decentralization in this context implies the transfer of power from "territorial" (national and sub-national units of smaller size) and "functional" state to parastatal, non-governmental, or private agencies. In education governance, decentralization involves (a) redistribution which deals with power sharing, (b) efficiency geared towards enhancing cost-effectiveness of an educational system through a more efficient deployment and management of resources (financial, human, and material), and (c) cultures of learning that emphasize decentralization of educational content perspectives. To achieve these objectives means decentralizing financial practices.

Financial Decentralization Defined

Financial decentralization is a policy of (1) allocating funds from national levels to sub-national levels to use according to their priorities, and (2) giving the sub-national levels appropriate powers to raise their own finances to use in accordance with their own priorities. This policy is one major strategy of addressing the problem of inadequate educational resources in developing countries.

Financial decentralization, as a policy of mobilizing adequate resources for public education (primary and secondary levels), is advocated on the premise that national policy makers and top civil servants will be truly committed to involving those expected to implement educational policies at the local levels. As well the policy is advocated on condition that there will be no undermining of authority, even if unconsciously, in the administrative structure of an educational system. As a strategy, financial decentralization focuses on finding financial solutions to developing countries' inability to provide enough money for sound education to their growing populations.

Decentralization and Effective Mobilization of Resources

Decentralization is quite often introduced with two expectations: first, it may lead to considerable mobilization and generation of resources that are not available under more centralized conditions where citizens often expect resources to flow from the central government (Weiler, 1990). This expectation concerns the possibility of bringing hitherto untapped local resources into the overall resource pool available to education. There are traces of this strategy in the industrialized world, but it has become a particularly prominent feature of educational policies in developing countries, largely under the influence of the World Bank (World Bank, 1980; Paqueo & Lourdes de Vera, 1988). The reason is that a decentralized educational system is more likely to involve a broader range of societal institutions and groups. The expectation is directed particularly at the local community level, which, in return for a greater role in the making of educational decisions, it is also expected to express a strong sense of commitment to the overall educational enterprise by generating additional resources for school construction and maintenance, teacher salaries, and the like. Weiler (1990), however, expresses skepticism over resource mobilization because of its complexity but mainly because of the notion that *without real transfer of influence away from the central authority of the state, significant new resources are unlikely to be forthcoming from either the local level or the private sector.*

A recent study of Ghana's pre-university educational system lends some credence to this skepticism (Mankoe, 1992). Bray and Lillis, cited in Weiler, (1990, p. 438) concluding their comparative study of community financing of education in the developing world observed:

> Decentralization and community participation are frequently just a model to which it is fashionable to pay lip service. Governments are pleased to accept the resources and the grassroots initiatives which coincide with their own concepts; but they are

rarely willing to relinquish control and place themselves in a position where their policies can be undermined.

Secondly, decentralization provides a system that can utilize available resources more effectively and efficiently. Decentralization seems to increase familiarity with local conditions and needs. This, in turn, may lead to a better match between demand and supply and hence, to a more economical utilization of limited resources. In the context of the poorer countries of the Third World, the dramatic erosion of the resource base of national governments may more than pre-empt whatever economies are being effected at the local levels through decentralization (Bray, 1984).

The generation of new resources is contingent on a real sharing of power in the decision-making process. It is unlikely that local communities or private firms will make added resources available to an educational system over which they have just as little influence as they had before. Bacchus (1990) cautioned, however, that the decision whether to decentralize or not would depend on what tasks in an organization are being considered. When a government is trying to increase community participation in the provision of educational services, it may find that decentralization of decision-making in certain key areas such as allocation of schools and the construction of school buildings are helpful in its efforts to secure greater community support for such activities. Bacchus pointed out that a function of the educational system that does not lend itself to decentralization, especially in small states, is that of budgeting and financing. Yet states have a greater opportunity to permit local inputs into this process, especially in situations where the population is easily accessible or where the central administration is not fully aware of the conditions under which schools in certain areas operate. This could help prevent waste, for example, in making a central decision to supply electric cookers to all schools irrespective of whether or not they have electricity.

Lyons (1985) arguing against centralization noted that with regard to equity, those who control at the centre frequently neglect the periphery, because knowledge about its special requirements may not be available. Moreover, at the centre the political claims of those who are closer to the Minister or whose pressures are more powerful command more urgent attention. Consequently the poor will continue to pay relatively more in money and work for the inadequate education of their children unless ways can be found at the local or regional level to pay full attention to their problems. While arguments are advanced to support the decentralization policy, there are reasons for centralized allocative authority.

Justification for Central Allocative Authority

In education, as in other policy areas, authority is effectively exercised in two ways: through the regulation of institutional and individual behavior. Equally important, the state exercises its authority over the allocation of resources to the public educational system (Weiler, 1990). Through its budgetary authority, the state deals with the educational system's need for financial resources, but also tends to control and regulate the supply of duly qualified human resources and of material resources like land, equipment, and teaching materials. Part of the authority of the state over the allocation of resources consists of setting the terms for the contributions made to education by other entities such as students, families, local and regional authorities, philanthropic organizations, and the like. As Hentschke (1985, p. 60) explained, two forces work against school district budget maximization, for example. He noted that first, for sponsors, education is but one of the many services competing for their resources. Second, as sponsors allocate more resources to school districts, they have to expend additional resources to monitor and control school administrators to ensure that their educational preferences, not district administrators' preferences, are being pursued.

The state's regulatory and allocative functions tend to be exercised in rather central ways. This is particularly true where there is a single centre of policy authority at the national level as in Ghana, Mexico or Malaysia. It also prevails in federal systems like that of Nigeria representing a certain degree of decentralization, even though their component parts (states) could be seen as multiple centres with the same kinds of centripetal dynamics.

According to Weiler (1990), centralization is supposed to (a) enhance equity by reducing or eliminating whatever disparities exist between different parts of a country in terms of resources, and (b) increase effectiveness by utilizing economies of scale and allowing greater mobility of resources to where they are most needed. One argument, as Weiler noted, is that centralization would reduce the effect of disparities in local property tax base from which local school districts had traditionally derived their main income.

Lyons (1985) also argued that decision-making in and control of educational planning by the centre are favoured by considerations of equity, national unity and management efficiency. The equity argument is that if adequate education is to be extended to poverty areas which are short of money, teachers, buildings, equipment, books, etc., authorities at the centre should be responsible for education as a whole. This means that through the national taxation system and, where relevant, arrangements for contributions and receipts of revenues between the regions (or states) and national governments, resources should be allocated to those districts and states which labour under a relative deficiency of educational and social provisions.

Byrne (1974) contended that schools in poverty areas require special care if they are to be brought up to the conditions of education prevailing in well-established areas. Unit costs and consequently per pupil payments need to be higher in poor areas than in wealthy local authorities in order to overcome deep rooted educational deficiencies.

Notwithstanding the arguments in favor of centralization, it has been found to delay national projects sometimes (Lyons, 1985). Lyons points out that among the reasons why delays occur is the inadequate preparation of programs and projects, difficulties in obtaining and, paradoxically perhaps, spending funds for projects. Delays also occur for technical reasons in the execution of projects, including backlog of equipment and the time required to purchase land. Delays become even greater where educational projects have an international component and decision-making acquires an inter-continental dimension.

Lyons (1985) concluded that in developing countries it is necessary to study how the centre can carry out the functions of a techno-rational nature which are essential and proper to it. How sub-national units can plan and implement their segments of national programs and projects more effectively, given their special needs, should also be studied. The political will to plan and achieve programs in the sense of continuity of effort is an essential prerequisite for the planning process. The ongoing debate among policy makers about what strategies are appropriate to adopt in financing education is a reflection of economic constraints facing the nation states.

Economic Constraints

The economic environments from which national efforts are being made to provide for education seem to curtail the overall benefits. Education seems to be affected more than other sectors of the economy. The growing economic constraints in many developing countries have resulted in budget cuts in public investment in several sectors (Tilak, 1989). The reduction of fiscal support may be more severe in social sectors like education, partly due to relative under-recognition of economic benefits of investment in education as well as other socio-economic factors.

Under conditions of economic austerity, education has either to suffer decline in real resources, and restrict its role in development, or search for rather non-conventional methods of generating resources. In many less developed countries, the education sector is characterized by the simultaneous existence of these phenomena. Real resources allocated to education from the public treasury have declined as a proportion of Gross National Product, or total government expenditure, and not rarely in absolute terms. This has serious implications, as the vast majority of the population in these countries suffer from inadequacy of basic needs in education as denoted in universal primary education and universal adult literacy. Universal secondary education is, in fact, a very distant goal for many developing countries. The quality of education in these countries has therefore been lamentable. Accordingly, Tilak (1989) suggested that the need for a search for alternative methods of financing education is growing in importance. In this context, the role of the communities in financing education has attracted the attention of many.

Problems of Pre-University Education Financing

If school financing is a problem at present, educational financing in the future will surely demand the best thinking of the best minds in the world (Boles & Davenport, 1983, p. 403). The World Bank (1986, p. 6) pointed out that education is widely accepted as a major instrument for promoting socio-economic development, and that educational expenses are often the most important item in developing countries' budgets. Yet in most countries, education is not contributing all it can to development. In this regard, Rwambiwa (1988) has identified four major problems. First, there is under-investment in education as a whole. There is a decline in many countries' overall public budgets in real terms. Tight overall finances and intersectoral competition for resources tend to make education a victim of budget cuts. Analysis of current expenditures on education shows that the government is overburdened with the responsibility to raise literacy rate; and it is not yet in a position to improve the quality of learning through extra spending on instructional resources

Second, there is misallocation of resources within individual schools, and inequality in the distribution of educational costs and benefits among various income groups. The present financing arrangements contribute to misallocation of resources devoted to education. The high degree of public subsidization of higher education is reflected in the difference between the private and social rates of return.

Third, there is inefficient use of resources within individual schools. Often, the mix of purchased inputs, such as teachers' services and pedagogical materials, is inefficient. Inefficiency also arises when lower-income students with good learning potential are not able to secure places at the next grade level either because they drop out for economic reasons or because they cannot compete with students from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Finally there is inequality in the distribution of educational costs and benefits among various income groups. The relatively few individuals who gain access to higher education receive more subsidies (in absolute terms) than do those at the lower levels. Also, evidence indicates that richer groups are over-represented at all levels of education, but especially at the university level.

Furthermore, inadequate resource mobilization has been one major impediment to pay for primary and secondary education in many countries. This impediment is brought about by different set of problems. Inflation and economic recession have been two major problems to both the government and other contributors to financing of education. For example, Wanaswa and Omoka (1982) reported that in Kenya a loan negotiated between the Kenya government and World Bank was thought to be sufficient to construct 13 boarding primary schools. Owing to inflation, however, only six schools were constructed from the loan. Inflation causes constant increases in the cost of building materials. Another problem is lack of access to good roads to the schools, particularly those in the remote areas.

In a situation where these problems are encountered, the community is called upon to assist. This invitation is, however, not as straightforward as it may seem. Wanaswa and Omoka (1982) noted that many headteachers in Kenya echoed the state of helplessness in which they often found themselves when parents as well as the community were not responding to appeals for contributions. Consequently some headteachers out of necessity had to violate the regulation regarding suspension of pupils because of the failure of parents to meet development fund obligations. An important source of funds is donor assistance provided by foreign governments and agencies, but Habte (1988) has pointed out that such donors have not paid sufficient attention to the issue of recurrent costs in the design of education projects. As a result, many governments have found it impossible to sustain projects in which recurrent costs are out of line with national ability to support them over time. Hence, there is a need to give greater consideration to recurrent costs if future education projects are to succeed beyond the short term.

The resource supply mechanisms to institutions are also cumbersome, if not complex, and are subject to frequent modifications. A detailed understanding would therefore take time to acquire, and need regular updating. Hence the real challenge to educational authorities is the allocation, and subsequent monitoring in the use of resources (Dennison, 1984, p. 62). There can be no absolute certainty about a decision to award more resources to one institution rather than another. And as Dennison pointed out, such a choice may attempt to obey the established rules, but these rules in turn are contestable by those who perceive a legitimate right to be involved in resource decision-making. Hill (1988, p. 98) referred to a scheme that would ensure that parents and the community knew on what basis the available resources were distributed in their area and how much was being spent on each school. There is also a need to give managers of schools the freedom to take expenditure decisions which match their own priorities, and guarantee that their own schools will benefit if they achieve efficient savings. In the next section, current trends with respect to (a) raising of finance for public primary and secondary schools and (b) allocating expenditure and resources are discussed.

Various National Strategies

The late 1970s marked the beginning of economic problems for most economies, particularly those in the Sub-Saharan African countries. The 1980s became even a more difficult period. According to Tilak (1990), out of thirty-two African countries on which data were analyzed, twenty-three were found to have experienced negative rates of growth in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita during the 1980-85 period. The agricultural sector was hurt by drought, deterioration in terms of trade, and unfavorable national policies. Their economies were also characterized by economic stagnation with low rates of investments and high rates of unemployment. Further rapid growth of population exacerbated the problem. As a result, most countries felt serious strain on scanty public investments in development. This problem is not peculiar to African countries. It has affected developing countries in Asia and Latin America as well (Yannakopulos, 1980). In Indonesia, for example, Yannakopoulos observed that natural resources have not been fully utilized for the welfare of the communities. The primary reason is that even though the country has much manpower, skilled people who can exploit natural resources are still lacking. The solution, therefore, is to develop the potentialities of human resources, especially young human resources to fulfill community needs. Some local government organizations provide services to individuals in the community, aimed at meeting educational needs, but these efforts are found to be ineffective as well as inefficient. This means that many learning resources available in the community are still unused or under-utilized. One explanation for this situation may the centralized administration within which the government attempts to do everything for the people. Examples may be cited from other countries to illustrate this unhealthy situation.

In Nepal, a Master Plan Team set up in 1991 to review the educational system made 18 recommendations related to the management of financial resources. In its report, the Team noted that during the previous 15 years, the total government expenditure had increased at an annual rate of 10 percent in real terms. Expenditure on education expanded at the rate of 10.2 per cent per annum in real terms during the 1975-90 period. Expenditure on basic primary education amounted to 57.7 percent of the education budget in 1990/91. Thus, as the Team pointed out, there had been a steady rise in the share of primary education in government education expenditure. For this reason, the Team stated among its recommendations that a policy involving the local bodies such as the Municipalities and Village Development Committees in establishing and operating primary schools should be adopted. Under that policy, the government was expected to provide technical and financial support to the Committees as they would require. In addition, the local communities were required to establish school funds which would be utilized for the provision of instructional materials for the schools. Sources of school funds were donations from social workers, trusts *Guthi* support from the local government, money raised from local initiatives, amount received from textbook recycling scheme, government grants received on the efficiency criteria, etc. In addition, the government planned to adopt specific measures for generating extra funds from the local communities.

In Thailand, an educational policy described in the National Education Scheme of 1977 states in Article 10:

> ". . . taking cognizance that education ranks the most high in its order of priority, the State shall endeavor to promote and attend to education. The organization of education is the first and foremost responsibility of the state. All educational management shall be under the control and supervision of the State. (p. 148)

An important issue raised about this policy was that "although the budget allocated to education is bigger than that of any other sector in 1977, the question is whether Thailand can maintain the pace of educational development as planned with the available resources, and if not, how sufficient resources may be obtained" (Yannakopulos, 1980, p. 148). Hence Article 23 of the National Education Scheme made the following provision:

> The State shall mobilize various resources, governmental, local and private, as well as from individual learners, in its management of education. It shall find ways and means to strengthen resources for education, bearing in mind equal distribution among different communities and educational institutes in order to put them to the best possible use. (p. 148)

It is apparent from this policy that resources from local individuals and groups of people were expected to play a significant role in educational management. However, in practice there was no serious mobilization or administration of such resources. As Yannakopoulos pointed out, the management of local support was scattered among individual institutions and provinces. Resources provided to education by local people were regarded as "extra gifts" and not as a resource component in the planning of education. Therefore, the need for well-organized administration and mobilization of local support became quite evident.

In Brazil, Latin America, Yannakopoulos (1980, p. 22) stated that, "the rapid expansion of its educational system over the last few years, and great socio-economic inequalities among the various regions, are the two main problems." Most of the time there are no agencies or groups of persons with special functions who are charged with educational administration at the municipal (or local) level. The result is that there are no criteria, norms, priorities or basic information which could support a co-ordinated development of the educational system. Moreover, financial resources are in general, insufficient in view of the expanding educational system. This situation, according to Yannakopulos, is reinforced by bad utilization and lack of rationalization of the existing financial resources. Population distribution throughout the country and the need for adequate organization and functioning of educational services and activities, imply clearly that educational administration has to aim at decentralizing its functions (Yannakopoulos, 1980).

Paul, Hamilton and Williams (1988, p. 197) reported in Guyana that the government assumed full responsibility for and control of education which became free from the nursery to university. Community financing, however, became important and is still encouraged. The various community bodies supporting education include religious bodies which are the most vibrant group. The authors noted that the work of the churches gradually expanded and improved until some of the best educational institutions were run by them. In the local government bodies, district councils were given power to establish, equip, and manage schools, and to make financial grants to individuals and institutions. Other notable bodies that provided significant assistance were parent-teacher associations, old students associations, adoption agencies, and friends of schools.

The situation in Nigeria was that in 1989, education was the largest single budgetary item at the federal level. At the state level it has also been the highest. As the school enrollment expands so does the expenditure. There is therefore a sort of a cycle of expansion and increase in educational expenditure. There is a monetary crisis that has a very telling effect on the resource capital and hence the quality of education (Aminu, 1990, p. 581). Therefore, one issue in educational advancement is the efficiency drive of resources. Calling upon the local community to assist in that respect is probably one solution.

In Burma, Cin and Scanden (1988) stated that schools are supported by a range of individuals and community bodies. They observed that:

> Most schools are supported by PTAs as well as philanthropic individuals who may or may not have children in the institutions. Communities often organize cultural bodies and self-help groups of various kinds, and political party members and government officers at the local level also usually play a key role. In state primary schools, local support is part of a joint effort between communities and government. In 'affiliated' primary schools, initiatives come entirely from the communities themselves. (p. 171)

From the on-going practices, it could be inferred that in several developing countries, governments and community efforts are under way to mobilize resources in their attempts to make educational funding a corporate burden. What is required to make these efforts more effective is for the governments of these countries to examine seriously their current policies and make the necessary restructuring to improve the resource base for education, bearing in mind their economic constraints.

Improving the Resource Base for Education

History, according to Odden (1992) shows that, nationally, education has always received large increases in real resources over the decades. Assuming that historical patterns continue, a likely fiscal scenario for the 1990s is that funding will continue to rise. The imperative for education in the 1990s is to craft a new bold vision for education, locate and allocate new funds toward strategies that show promise for implementing that vision. McMahon (1982) observed that as costs rise and all education budgets grow tighter, there is an increasing struggle to find new resources that can be put to more efficient uses to maintain quality and innovation, while also assuring equitable access to all education.

Odden suggested that the first step for school finance in the 1990s will be to link the school finance structure to substantive educational objectives, specifically to programs needed to accomplish national or state goals for student performance. If these goals are taken seriously, nations will need to provide a funding base that will allow all local school districts to meet them. Since these goals include teaching all students how to think, solve problems, and communicate at levels much higher than most districts accomplish today, the cost of the program is likely to be high. And as Thornton (1988, p. 20) remarked, successful development reflects the degree to which a community is willing to affirm the importance of education, and sense of culture. This education agenda is more grandiose than most of those that have been tried previously.

As the World Bank Report (1988) referring to Sub-Saharan Africa put it, no single set of educational policies can be prescribed for all Sub-Saharan Africa. The reason is that the nature and scope of issues and the responses to them differ markedly among African countries. Any discussion of policies and priorities for a region as vast and diverse as Sub-Saharan Africa naturally runs the risk of overstating commonalties and understating differences. Enormous diversity exists among African countries along several dimensions -- economic, political, institutional, cultural, linguistic, and educational. For these reasons, no attempt should be made to prescribe a single educational policy for the entire continent -- that would be inappropriate and futile. Instead, the focus should be on addressing trends and issues that, because of their importance in many African countries, assume importance for the whole continent (World Bank Report, 1988).

Although undoubtedly painful and politically difficult, adjustment policies will most likely alleviate the burden of education and training on public budgets. Therefore necessary adjustments that lead to diversification of sources of finance are called for. As a necessary part of country-specific policy packages, diversification can be achieved through increased cost sharing in public education and through increased official tolerance and encouragement of non-governmental suppliers of educational services. For most African countries the scope for cost sharing in primary education is negligible or non-existent. Each country has to organize the task in its own way.

The World Bank notes that in many countries, a fruitful approach to policy design might be expected to include the following:

- establishing a national commission to oversee the work;
- constituting a technical staff to support the commission;
- drawing upon the nation's best political judgment and analytical talent from the ministries of finance and planning as well as education, and from institutions of tertiary education and research;
- building a national consensus through debate of the emerging findings and recommendations; and
- taking advantage of the experience of other African countries in developing the nation's own educational development program.

As the World Bank (1988) suggested, educational resources can be grouped into three broad categories: (a) finance; (b) personnel; and (c) materials. In many countries, financial resources are provided by the national government through taxes. The government has the responsibility of paying recurrent and development expenditures of all institutions within the public system of education. Textbooks are supplied by the government. Local authorities also levy taxes and collect tolls for a variety of services in local authority institutions. The greater proportion of educational expenditure at the local level, however, is met by the national government. The responsibility for building new schools, providing facilities, equipment and services for the local community is supposed to be met by the national and local governments. Inasmuch as experience have pointed to the inadequacy of these resources, workable strategies for generating more resources for both primary and secondary education are urgently called for. Mankoe and Maynes (1994, p. 30) referring to Ghana's case, advised on the need to examine carefully and monitor continuously the educational resource issue. All stakeholders will have to cooperate in efforts to make manageable what is certain to be a persistent problem.

Government Policies on Resources for Primary Education

Primary education lays the foundation without which no superstructure can be built (Dery, 1994). According to the World Bank (1988, p. 51), there are policies by which countries can improve the efficiency of resource use in primary education. Yet when all is said and done, there is little likelihood of reducing significantly recurrent unit costs at this level, especially if countries also hope to improve the quality of education. There is more scope for reducing unit capital costs, but even so, it is unlikely that overall per capita costs can be significantly reduced at the primary level. The principal reason for the low quality of primary education in most developing countries is the comparatively low use of resources per pupil. In 1983 the median per pupil public expenditure in Africa, for example, was under $50. By comparison, public spending per pupil was approximately 2.5 times this amount in East Asia and Latin America and over 30 times in the industrialized countries.

Thus further growth of primary education, contended the World Bank, will inevitably require that additional resources be mobilized. Even with no quality improvements (and assuming no improvements in efficiency), the amount of resources devoted to the primary level would need to increase by more than three percent just to keep pace with population growth. In principle, these additional resources can be made available either by reallocating resources within the education sector in favor of the primary level or by increasing the total allocation to the education sector. The World Bank suggests that the latter could be achieved through an increase in foreign aid for education. In the recent past, only about eight percent of foreign aid went to the primary level.

Most of the increase in total resources for higher education urgently required in most countries, will have to come not from growth of the public budget, but rather from increased private financial contribution to the sub-sector. A study based on twelve African countries by the World Bank indicated that, on average, primary enrollment could increase by a remarkable 18 percent with the public funds saved if university students paid their own living expenses. This implies re-allocation of education funds.

Increased total public spending on education would have to be financed either through increased economic growth (maintaining constant the share of resources devoted to education) or by an increase in the total share of education in the total budget. For the former, the growth prospects for Sub-Saharan Africa for the foreseeable future are modest at best. In the World Development Report of 1986, the World Bank examined scenarios of the average annual rates of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth ranging from 3.2 percent ("low case") to 4.0 percent ("high case") for the low-income African countries over the next ten years. If the low case is the more accurate projection, these countries may suffer another decade of falling real incomes per capita. Even in the high case, GDP growth will barely keep pace with projected population increase. Thus over the next decade additional resources required for doing more than simply maintaining present educational coverage and quality will not be derived from economic growth.

Different strategies can be used to mobilize additional resources for primary education by recovering the costs of education from the recipients of the service. Educational costs may be recovered through school fees or other monetary levies, or they may be repaid in kind -- for example, in the form of free labor for school construction and maintenance. It is estimated that private expenditures now cover about six percent of the costs in East Africa and eleven percent in West Africa. These percentages are only about one-third as high at the university level.

A distinct trend in recent years, particularly in the Anglophone countries but elsewhere in the region (Africa) as well, has been a shift of the main responsibility for the construction and maintenance of primary school classrooms from the central government to parents and local communities (World Bank, 1988). Driven by the inadequacy of government funds to support the sizable capital budget for primary education, many African governments have been willing to accept and even demand greater involvement by the recipients of educational services (World Bank, 1988). This policy has enabled primary school development programs to proceed at a more rapid pace than would have been possible otherwise, and it has tended to ensure that new schools are opened where the demand for primary education is the strongest.

The World Bank points out that for items other than classroom construction and maintenance, private financing is less significant in African primary education. This is as it should be, since if fees are charged it is likely that the very poorest African child will be deprived of any education at all. Recent African experience suggests that parents are much less willing to pay for basic tuition than for institutional materials. Where tuition fees have been imposed in public primary schools, some enrollment declines have been experienced.

Government Policies on Resources for Secondary Education

Secondary education is aimed at building on the foundation laid at the primary level. It seeks to strengthen the general intellectual skills that are relevant to many occupations and to subsequent education (World Bank, 1988). Its goal is to prepare individuals for adult responsibility and for the world of work, where most job-specific skills will be learned. As is the case for primary education, the quality of secondary education is also a great concern for most African countries. The amount of essential non-salary recurrent inputs being provided are not adequate. The World Bank has projected that for nearly all African countries in the years to come, the biggest challenge with respect to secondary education will be expansion -- how to satisfy the burgeoning demand for a limited number of secondary school places.

By 1960 only two of the thirty-nine countries of Sub-Saharan Africa enrolled more that six percent of the relevant age group in secondary education. These two countries were Mauritius and Ghana, where the gross enrollment ratios were 22 percent and 19 percent respectively. For the rest of the region, secondary education remained highly selective (World Bank, 1988, p. 54). Three of the high secondary enrollment countries -- Congo, Mauritius, and Zaire -- already have secondary enrollment ratios more than 50 percent. The greater emphasis on secondary education has come at the expense of primary education. Among the thirteen high secondary enrollment countries, the proportion of public expenditure on education ranged from 16 percent to 56 percent, with a median of 35 percent, whereas among the ten low enrollment countries this figure ranged from 14 percent to 40 percent, with a median of 30 percent. Another major component of the school finance plan of the 1990s derives from the movement toward site-based management. This policy recognizes the school as the basic decision-making unit.

Involving Schools and the Community

A major source of funding is the grants provided from the government coffers. Inasmuch as these grants are limited, the local community and indeed, educational institutions themselves, have a responsibility to ensure that other sources of funds are identified. Yet, as Burrup, Brimley, Jr. and Garfield (1988, p. 133) observed, the question of the degree or extent of power local districts should have in the control of their own fiscal operations has been controversial and unsettled. For example, if the state provides most of the local school revenue, should it exercise more authority over the local school districts than when it provides less? In the local school district, the administrator plans expenditures and anticipated revenues of a school district in a given fiscal year, together with data and information relating the fiscal elements to the educational philosophy, programs, and needs of the district (Hartman (1988). Rarely does an administrator find that the financial resources are adequate to perform the many tasks that he or she would like to accomplish.

Most of the educational administrator's budget is earmarked for salaries and other uncontrolled costs, hence one of the few avenues through which to obtain a degree of budgetary flexibility is fund raising and grant writing (Keith and Girling, 1991). Hence, as the authors have observed, effective administrators spend much of their time writing grants or providing support and encouragement to teachers to write grants, working with parents and community to identify sources of financial support. Administrative openness with teachers can result in significant gains as teachers come forth with their ideas for cost effectiveness. Also supplemental funds provided by parent groups can provide funding for an enrichment program.

Grant writing is a strategy by which a school applies to a foundation or a granting agency for some school projects. Keith and Girling (1991) advise individuals seeking such a project grant to prepare concise proposals, identifying (1) the specific goals and educational benefits, (2) the proposed activities to be undertaken, (3) any supplemental sources of funds, and (4) any potential savings that will make the project cost-effective. In order to achieve success in such fund applications, administrators are advised to involve their staff through (1) holding grant-writing workshop for teachers, (2) finding a sponsor for small grants for teachers to prepare grant proposals, (3) meeting business people and asking them about their concerns and interests in public education and what programs they would like to see happen in the community schools, (4) creating an academic advisory board for the school, (5) mounting an educational tax incentive, and (6) forming an educational foundation. Boyd-Barrett (1976, p. 28) stated:

> There is a wide range of resource-links between authorities, schools and industries, for the promotion of understanding of industrial life for teachers and pupils. Any school which wanted to maximize the resources available to it would need to give serious consideration to all possibilities such as these.

Boyd-Barrett observed that parents form an important source of funds. However, such assistance tends to be voluntary. Its impact on the school tends to be uneven and is greatly influenced by socio-ecological factors. As he pointed out:

> Factors that may facilitate greater parental motivation and success in fund-raising include: a homogenous 'neighbourhood' catchment area, where many of the parents may also have been ex-pupils, and where there is high community identification with the school; a relatively affluent parent body; an emotive single-issue campaign with respect to a particular and badly-needed item of equipment; a strong reputation in certain out-of-school activities which are traditionally supported, in part, by voluntary funds. (p. 39)

Rensburg (1984) referred to a number of possibilities that are open to the community where education with production is possible in the field of formal education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. He noted that in the field of formal education, if the school authorities are favourable, it is possible to incorporate productive activities into the school time table. If the authorities are not well disposed to such activities, it is possible for staff and students to undertake them in their own time. In either case, such activities can be organized as a school co-operative -- in one case, in the other unofficial. Depending on the community's mainstream economy, Rensburg (1984, p. 249) suggesting an endless list of possible activities noted that:

> Schools can be involved in public works, their own buildings and equipment, in clinics, water reticulation, roads, building of libraries and offices, and other public facilities. They can be involved in soil conservation and land reclamation and improvement. They can make parks and playgrounds and build early childhood education and day-care centres. They can take part in afforestation scheme. They can be involved in constructing and looking after museums. They can help to set up recreation centres. They can take part in public housing construction schemes. There is much the schools can do to feed themselves and to provide their own teaching materials. They can undertake research and experimental work in appropriate technologies resources. They can undertake waste collection and recovery, sorting and recycling. There is, moreover, a great deal of production, in terms of services and goods, which they can undertake. Examples include: cycle, vehicle engine repairs, electrical repairs, baking, tanning and leatherwork, food-and oil-processing, carpentry, metalwork, brick-making, pottery and glass making.

Goodman (1988, p. 43) posed the question, "What can be done to assure adequate resources for public education in the future?" Goodman suggested that all levels of government, business and industry, higher education, and enlightened citizens have major roles to play to assure adequate resources for public schools. He proposed, for example, that the property rate should be available for local use to whatever extent the local taxpayers desire. If citizens are willing to pay more for local education than the government advocates, they should have the right. At the same time, however, the state government must provide a foundation level to assure that every student will receive an adequate education no matter where the student lives. The use of these strategies, of course, implies the active participation of teachers, students, parents and the principal. In this connection, the principal using the authority conferred on him or her would need to consult with a school's staff to plan what activities to undertake in the school to obtain more resources. In many ways, this means site-based management.

Site-Based Management

Site-based management (sometimes referred to as school-based management) as an emergent thrust of the 1980s, requires the central staff to become development specialists and to provide a variety of support and planning activities never before expected (Candoli, et al. 1984). The authors argued that with serious efforts to decentralize functions to the various building units, many decisions previously made centrally are shifted to the building principal. And the power for rational improvement in schools which is offered by local financial management has been found to be very great. Herman (1991, p. vi) defined site-based management as:

> *A structure and a process* that allows greater building level decision-making related to some or all the areas of instruction, personnel, budget, policy, and other matters pertinent to local school building maintenance; *and* it is a process that *involves* a variety of *stakeholders* in decisions related to the local, individual school.

Odden (1992b, p. 17) emphasized that with outcome goals set at the top of the system -- at the national, state, and district levels -- schools need to be given responsibility for accomplishing those goals. Taking site-decentralization seriously in fiscal terms requires site-based budgeting.

Burgess (1988) also contended that the power for rational improvement in local educational authorities is even greater. It can help them to make sensible decisions, not just about finance, but also about organization and policy. Local financial management means the delegation of the budget of a school from the local education authority to the headteachers and the governing body of the school (Blanchard, Lovell & Ville, 1989). It has also been argued that site-based management can introduce into public school some of the incentives for productivity and client satisfaction which are believed to be more prevalent in private schools while still protecting the public interest through limited regulation and control (Swanson & King, 1991). According to Jordan and Lyons (1992), the goal of site-based decision-making is to empower school staff and parents by providing them with the authority to allocate resources in ways that address the educational needs in their individual school. It does not negate the need for school district goals, objectives or priorities. Rather, it gives the school staff flexibility in achieving the goals and objectives and addressing the priorities.

Site-based management implies decentralized resource management which, as Stewart and Holtham (1989) pointed out, increases managerial authority while ensuring effective management control with the result that the authority is likely to achieve both more efficient and more effective use of resources. Eicher (1984, p. 92) remarked that one should expect the quality of education provided in a given school to be affected by the ability of the school principal to raise local resources (when he or she is free to do so) and to use them for improving the quality of physical facilities by his or her ability to organize the time schedule of the various streams, to develop the enthusiasm of teachers and of students.

The allocation of resources, according to Thomas, Kemmerer, and Monk (1982), is a central function of the decision-making systems which are designed to facilitate learning. These systems are complex for several reasons. First, decisions are made at several levels;

resources are allocated by state, federal, and local governments, as well as administrative offices, schools, classrooms, and homes. Second, financing and budgeting decisions made at one level affect and are affected by decisions made at other levels. Third, each level of decision-making is characterized by a unique set of actors and a specific definition of the resource set.

The size of a school budget is determined by legislators and taxpayers, and the total amount of money available affects the quality and amount of teacher services, space, materials, books, and equipment which may be purchased for the school year. Budget decisions made by superintendents and principals determine the allocation of resources among schools, curricular areas, and classrooms. The amount and quality of purchased resources in the classroom in turn affect the manner in which teachers structure learning activities. This broad view of decision-making, as Thomas, Kemmerer, and Monk (1982) pointed out, is not universally accepted, but if it is true that financial decisions made by the superintendent, the principal and the teacher have direct impact on what goes on within the school, then it seems plausible for some amount of decision-making power to be provided. It means financial delegation which Thomas, Kirkpatrick and Nicholson (1989) explain as

> [Moving] more of the decision-making on the use of resources to the school and away from the local educational authority. It includes the *power of virement* on the budget. This means that schools are told their budget for the coming year but they have the right to move (vire) spending from one item to which it has been allocated in the estimates (such as maintenance) to another item such as books. Delegation includes more flexibility in deciding who will be employed to do certain jobs. . . Delegation also means that it is the school which decides what maintenance work is to be carried out and when, setting priorities for re-decorating and arranging for such work to be done at times which are convenient for the smooth running of the school. (p. 6)

Yet, as Knight (1983) noted, schools do not really have a policy relating to their own costs and finance. At least, they certainly do not have a well developed set of policies, as they do, for example, in relation to examinations, discipline or pastoral care. All they have are a few policies mainly revolving around capitation, for example, for allocation, placing orders, purchasing, storage, inventory control, with perhaps some exhortation about general economies. Therefore Knight suggested:

> Perhaps this is partly because schools consider school costs of little importance, not really their business. But it is also because they do not ask the right questions. They ask about their pastoral care system, for example, or about their examination policy and what sort of outcomes they should expect. But some of the obvious questions about school costs never even get asked, let alone answered. (p. 113)

Questions that could be asked by schools include (1) Can we make economies in the total running of the school? (2) Can we get better value for money within the total costs of the school? (3) Is the balance of cost structure right? and (4) What constraints could be modified to make better use of our financial resources?

Consequently the British Education Reform Act of 1988 advises the introduction of effective schemes of delegation that will enable governing bodies and headteachers of schools to plan their use of resources to maximum effect in accordance with their own needs and priorities, and to make schools more responsive to their clients -- parents, pupils, the local community and employers. Under this system, the relationship between the Minister of Education, the local government, the district education authority, and the school -- the headteacher and the governing body, must be clearly specified. If site-based management is accepted and fully implemented, the most crucial and indeed surprising element of that partnership, as Blanchard, et al. (1989) have noted, is that one partner is not able to tell another partner what to do. All partners are competent and fully accountable. And nearly all proposals for implementing the strategies required to meet national goals for education recommend increased autonomy for schools -- the service-providing units of the education system. While the outcome goals are set at the top of the system -- at the national, state, and district levels -- schools need to be given responsibility for accomplishing these goals (Odden, 1992).

Odden observed that taking a strategy of decentralization seriously in fiscal terms requires site-based budgeting, which allocates substantial portions of school district revenues in a lump sum to schools and allows the professionals at the school to make decisions about how to use those funds. National policies could take the lead in developing approaches that foster site-based budgeting. The central philosophy underlying local finance management is the devolution of decision-making about a school's business to local managers. And obviously such delegation embraces processes and elements which are more wide-ranging than simply finance (Howard, 1988).

In another sense, the policy stipulates that a fixed percentage of base funding be allocated directly to schools as a lump sum or by requiring districts to allocate a fixed percentage -- perhaps all -- of instructional expenditures to schools. In other words, states could become aggressive players in stimulating serious site-based management by "forcing" money to flow directly to schools. New research shows that, contrary to past site-based management initiatives, district and state-level approaches to site-based management in the 1990s will entail considerable devolution of fiscal decision-making to the schools.

Along with the issue of decentralized site-based budgeting, devolution of authority to school sites raises the governance of the role of school boards. School boards and district offices will lose power in site-based management. If taken seriously, school-based management raises issues related to traditional control of schools. It is crucial to bear in mind that the success of site-based management depends greatly on accountability on the part of those to whom educational resources are entrusted.

Accountability

An accountability system is another major component of school finance of the 1990s, with real incentives and sanctions driven by school outcomes (Odden, 1992). The public wants to know, for example, more about how certain expenditures have increased faster at certain times than have others and who benefits (Weaver, 1982). Accountability means that the local schools can demonstrate that they are operating in conformance with state statutes, using state funds as intended, and improving the performance of students in accordance with state goals. This demonstration implies making appropriate decisions on the use of funds. For example, Rossmiller (1982, p. 90) asserted that at the state and school district level, the application of cost-effectiveness techniques may improve productivity in such ancillary services as transportation, feeding, and housing of students.

Cost-benefit techniques may be used to help inform decisions concerning the relative economic merits of allocating resources to various levels or types of education. Weaver (1982) noted that given the restricted revenues, a decision to spend more money for one objective implies a decision to spend less for some other objectives. While few question the need for accountability, many question how to achieve it (Jordan & Lyons, 1992). The general idea is to reward schools that succeed in accomplishing their educational objectives and to sanction schools that consistently do not. Many aspects of designing a comprehensive accountability system need to be addressed. However, one issue specifically related to school finance is whether the system should focus on money inputs, the common practice in the past, or provide money incentives for producing student outcomes, a practice that some countries are increasingly adopting. Indeed, nearly all new incentive programs are outcomes-based and focus on the school -- not on the individual teacher. Because they promote co-operation and collegiality among staff members, school-based incentive plans help to accomplish school-wide student performance objectives. Hence Goodman (1985, p. 41) argued that the most important factor in determining the adequacy of education is the quality of the teaching and administrative staff. It is also crucial for administrators to be continually mindful of educational outcomes through analysis of cost-effectiveness of alternative educational programs. According to Webb (1988, p. 57) such analysis means:

> The evaluation of alternatives according to both their costs and their effects with regard to producing some outcome or set of outcomes. The goal of cost-effectiveness analysis is to provide decision-makers with data necessary to choose among alternatives on the basis of least cost and greatest effectiveness. . . Cost -effectiveness can be used not only to compare different educational programs, but also to determine the relative effectiveness of a particular program over time or for different students populations.

For effective and efficient systems of education in developing countries, Lauglo & McLean (1985) posed the following questions: (1) What is the character and strength of the attacks on national state education? (2) What are the political, economic and social movements which have undermined beliefs in the efficacy of existing state of educational systems? (3) Have educational systems in some respects become dysfunctional, redundant or repugnant? (4) What changes have taken place and what are their implications for the kind of education provided? Such inquiries can be conducted by analyzing the different rationales, ideologies and justifications for local autonomy in education.

Many proposals for increasing local autonomy, especially in industrialized countries, have assumed that central or regional government would provide the resources while local authorities would have greater control over their use (Lauglo and McLean, 1985). Can there be real local autonomy when resource allocation is controlled by national agencies which can hardly be expected to remain entirely neutral in the way resources are used? There is a further question of whether local communities as a whole will be fully committed to and involved in educational decision-making when they have little financial responsibility. In effect, lack of responsibility for providing resources may reduce the concern or involvement of many groups in the local community in local education. For this reason, (Jordan & Lyons, 1992) questioned:

> Rather than limiting accountability to pupil and teacher performance, it can be extended to parents, taxpayers, school board members, and legislators. Who is accountable for overcrowded classrooms with inadequate materials? Who is accountable for the fact that per-pupil expenditures and teacher salaries have not kept pace with inflation? (p. 28)

Holmes (1985) noted that frequently local school systems are less able to provide the necessary resources of equipment and trained teachers than do the larger centralized authorities. The taxonomy of the International Bureau of Education (Geneva) has identified some major components of education. These are aims, finance, administration, (internal and external to the institution), organization and structure of the system, curriculum and teacher education. Holmes, therefore, suggested that if policies are to be fully implemented it may be necessary to obtain the consent of the public however that opinion is expressed.

Hurst (1985), however, argued that from what we know of formal organizations in general, there is little reason to believe that the benefits and advantages so widely associated with decentralized administration are likely to accrue. The reason, according to him, is because nearly all the benefits popularly associated with decentralization are not *caused* by it. He cited the following areas of decision-making and asked which of them would necessarily be best administered at the school or local level:

raising finance
allocating expenditure and resources
allocating schools and colleges
teacher training and supply, salaries, conditions of service
language of instruction
examinations
curriculum
building and equipment norms
textbooks
methods of instruction
timetable

In the last several decades, in spite of considerable resources devoted to education and the remarkable expansion in enrollments, it has become apparent that many basic problems remain unsolved, that inequality continues to pose problems and in some cases has tended to become more acute rather than the reverse (Chau, 1985). Instead of central government bearing the whole burden of financing, a certain transfer of responsibility is made towards the local authorities with a view to involving them more in the sharing of educational expenditure. This may range from the participation of local communities in building primary schools to a greater contribution to educational costs. In certain cases, as a result of pressure from the regions a real change in the distribution of power may occur, either through an increase in the power to raise taxes (and therefore to mobilize new resources) or through the power to spend by changing the rules governing grants and subsidies.

Crispin (1985) was convinced that the local education authority is the basic 'unit of delivery'. That prompts us to find ways to secure legitimate national interests and priorities in complex government systems without excessive centralization. In short, designing school finance formulas in the 1990s will entail a close working relationship between program analysts and financial analysts with program analysts identifying the strategies that work to produce high levels of student achievement, and finance analysts determining the dollar level for the nation's funding program. The new system, then would link the education and finance systems. It would be driven by educational goals and student achievement, with finance structure designed to pay for the programs and strategies required to meet the goals. While so much attention is focused on the public system because it caters for the bulk of finances for education, we must not lose sight of the contributions made by the private sector.

Privatization of Education: The Pros and Cons

Private or independent schools generally refer to those financed by, and available for, specific sections of the general community. In some cases, however, government financial support for private enterprise has blurred the clear distinction between the public and private sectors (Hogan, 1984). Fox (1985) remarked that the attempt to define precisely what constitutes a public school is bedevilled by a lack of consensus as to where the boundary which separates them from the remainder of the private sector is to be drawn. In line with these notions, Johnson (1987, p. 49) observed that "the so-called independent 'sector' is made up of so many different types of independent schools that their headteachers do not typically see their institutions as competitive or complementary to their own endeavours." According to Johnson (1987), the reasons for the political survival of independent schools alongside the maintained sector has been the government's respect for the philosophical tenet that parents' choice of school for their children should not be arbitrarily restricted to the schools maintained by the state. Hence private schools continue to operate side-by-side with the public schools.

There is, however, an ongoing argument between public schools and private schools. Hogan (1984), referring to the Australian education system, for example, noted that such argument will leave the major problem -- the lack of education for the poor -- unsolved. And without the total community and government commitment, the problem is likely to remain for a long time to come. The protagonists who feel most strongly about the interests of private schools are parents whose children attend them. The large organization and pressure groups -- bishops, teachers, and bureaucrats -- may be politically more active, but there would be no argument without parents. And what drives most parents is the concern that their children should have available the best possible school education. This is especially true in times when full employment seems to have disappeared forever, and when the links between employment and a good education are very clear. The argument from the supporters of both public and private sectors is about money (Hogan, 1984).

Fox (1985, p. 125) stressed that parents, when making decisions about their children's education have a clear, if not always sharply defined, view of the social order for which their children are destined. In Britain, for example, Fox asserted that most parents perceive a distinct class structure. Therefore:

> Whilst majority perceive the apex of this structure as based upon inherited factors and therefore relatively closed to upward mobility, over three-quarters see social position within the remainder of the hierarchy as based upon a combination of attitudes, occupation and money, enabling social mobility to be achieved with relative ease in a downward as well as upward direction.

The reasons for which people choose a public school or a private school for their children may be discerned from the arguments advanced usually in favour or against private schools.

The Pros of Privatization of Education

As noted previously, it is a generally held view in many countries that provision of education, at least up to the basic level, is a primary responsibility of the state. Dennison (1983) pointed out that it has become an almost unquestioned faith that many services should be -- indeed, can only be -- provided by government, preferably by a monopoly. Dennison observed that far from the provision by state being necessary, a market is usually superior in meeting wants of individuals as they themselves judge them in the light of their own circumstances; and the market does so with economy and efficiency in the use of scarce resources. Furthermore, in meeting the genuine wants of individuals, 'social' objectives are more likely to be achieved than by imposing political objectives administered by bureaucrats.

Dennison made a number of arguments on privatization stressing that state provision, especially if a monopoly, creates problems which profoundly affect not only the operation of the service but also the whole political, economic and social structure.

Second, private schools relieve the state schools from having to educate thousands of children, thereby saving the taxpayers a considerable amount of money. When state provision absorbs a large part of the national income, even people with low incomes have to be heavily taxed, paying for services whether they use them or not, and often getting poor value for money when they do use them. In this situation, it is found that to some measure, private schools subsidize public schools. Furthermore, private schools instead of reducing the finance available for schooling, rather increase it by the fees paid by parents.

Third, there are some dangers inherent in state monopoly over education. One major danger of state monopoly is that it pursues objectives which are politically determined and removed from the wishes of the consumers who are forced to pay for it.

This result can be seen not only in the attack on independent schools as enabling parents to opt out of the state system, but also in hostility to all freedoms of choice within the state system itself. At a time when most people agree that educational resources are becoming scarce, it seems no longer plausible to hold that the state should continue to hold monopoly over the provision of social services let alone, education. Therefore education can be made accessible to more people by inviting private individuals, groups and organizations to share in the provision of education. Indeed private participation seems to be a preference to some citizens even when governments appear to be capable of providing adequate resources for all. Therefore, now that governments seem not able to cope with that basic responsibility any longer, could there be any contention on extending invitation to private participation?

Fourth, in spite of disparagement from many quarters, performance in public examinations is seen as the most reliable indicator of success or failure of schools in their primary function of educating children in the elements of literacy, numeracy and some knowledge and understanding of our intellectual heritage.

Fifth, the amount of expenditure made on education does not guarantee better results. Results point to many complexities such as differences in the extent to which provision has to be made for more expensive 'ethnic minority groups' and handicapped children. It has been found that in some instances, more money spent does not yield good results, while others who spend less manage to achieve above average performance.

Finally, Dennison (1983) remarked, there is little substance in the claim that private schools have 'superior resources' in the sense of higher expenditure. The majority spend no more than many state schools. In particular, their costs (excluding boarding) are below the average for secondary schools, and well below those of special schools. The main reasons are lower administrative costs, minimal expenditure on 'social engineering', and concentration of resources on activities which strengthen educational quality, such as teaching staff. In various aspects, such as buildings and equipment, many private schools are less well-founded than many state schools especially those built recently -- at least until pupils have had time to wreck them.

(Hogan, 1984, p. 35). Hogan noted that private schools can educate children better than public schools, and instead of resisting the drift of students away from the public sector, government should encourage it.

According to Schneider (1989, p. 75) a review of some of the American national data on private and public school students test scores, drop-out rates and college matriculation figures, indicates that private schools are particularly effective in providing poor and minority students with knowledge and skills that can increase their opportunities for social mobility.

The Cons of Privatization of Education

Those who oppose private schools allege that they preserve a class-divided society; allocate individuals to roles within society in such a manner as to monopolize the top positions, allowing a small and controlled amount of upward mobility of new blood; facilitate the social closure of those in the top positions in order to produce a unified social class and finally, as a consequence, they effectively diminish the maintained sector both materially and educationally (Fox, 1985, p. 1).

Second, private provision is regarded as inferior, 'divisive', and 'at the expense of' those dependent on state provision. Any development in the private sector is an 'attack' on the state sector. Emanating from the structure and the economic set up of private schools, they necessarily charge exorbitant fees, their services become open to virtually only the affluent in society. Their fees, as Dennison (1983, p. 29.) describes it, is "an admission charge for a ruling elite whose wealth gives them power and whose power gives them wealth."

Third, it has been argued that independent schools achieve their results by drilling their pupils to pass 'academic' examinations. They are regarded as 'more efficient examination-factories' than maintained schools for pupils of identical characteristics . The National Education Committee of Britain, rejecting examinations as valueless for assessing either individual ability or quality of schools declared that given their selective intake and superior resources, many private schools could be regarded as a failure, not a success on the basis of examination results (Dennison, 1983, p. 57).

Fourth, independent schools have long been pioneers in curricular development. By all the generally agreed criteria of academic achievement, they have done well and continue to do extremely well (Hempshell, 1986). Hempshell, however, suggested:

> It is these very successes at O-level, A-level and University entrance which prompt the blimpish to make invidious and often pointless comparisons with the maintained sector. This mindlessness is fraught with danger. *In extremis*, it can lead to an obsession with examination results to the total exclusion of the moral and social virtues education should seek to inculcate.

This notion implies that high performance in private schools derives primarily from student selection and superior resources, and not from anything done by the schools, which also implies that their results should be even better than they are.

Fifth, any government funding provided for private schools means that less money is available for government schools. Just as many private schools will not survive without government funding, so many government schools will not survive if students abandon the public for the private sector (Hogan, 1984). There is sometimes unfair competition. In some communities where the pattern of birthrate is not regular, government schools suffer double loss of pupils because of the irregular birthrate and increasing preference for private schools.

Sixth, private schooling often has a religious dimension. In Australia, for example, Hogan (1984) observed that not only are almost all non-governmental schools sponsored by churches or religious bodies, but the great majority are Catholic schools. The question of religion suggests another set of arguments about the comparative worth of public and private schools and government's duties with regard to funding. Therefore many opponents of denominational schools claim that they are socially divisive, and therefore governments should not give aid to foster such divisiveness.

Finally, there are some aspects of society which are too important or not profitable enough to be left to private enterprise, and schooling is one of these. He stated:

> Private enterprise may produce efficiencies at the top of the market, but can only be done by abandoning the lower end completely. It may be good for the rich, but it is bad for the poor. Private enterprise takes no account of questions of justice or equity in its search for efficiency or profit. Only social institutions answerable to the whole society, not just to stockholders, can be trusted to take seriously the interest of all children in society. National defence or foreign policy are not handed over to private enterprise; neither should schools.

Thus on the positive side of private schools, the arguments are that their market is usually superior in meeting the needs of individuals in the light of their own circumstances, relieve the state from having to educate all its youth, increase finances available for education, prevent state monopoly over education, are effective in providing the poor and minority with skills and knowledge for social mobility, and that they spend no more than state schools. On the negative side, private schools are noted to preserve class-divided society, are regarded as inferior and divisive, operate at the expense of those dependent on state provisions, achieve results by drilling pupils to pass examinations, are obsessed with examination results, cause less money for government schools, their religious inclinations are socially divisive, and that as a social service, education is too important to be left to private enterprise.

The Organization of Private Schools

In spite of the ongoing arguments, private schools play a distinctive role in providing alternative to state-sponsored education and socialization. The state, however, has the responsibility to ensure that public monies are spent in a manner consistent with legislative mandate, and to ensure a minimum standard of or level of education (Randall, 1994). Heads of private schools often see themselves as running a school which provides a particular kind of education. They lay emphasis on a particular kind of teaching -- formal, with an early introduction of subject specialisms, and the intention of taking every child beyond the norms of achievement for the age group (Johnson, 1987). Students who attend these schools must be to some extent academically capable of responding to the teaching in the schools. Headteachers may see their schools as in competition with maintained schools offering a similar type of education, or claim to supplement the maintained sector by offering a form of education not available in local-authority schools. Schneider (1989, p. 80) noted:

> The principal in many private schools is more likely to act as an instructional leader and a decision-maker. The private school community expects the principal to exercise leadership over the instructional program and be accountable for the consequences of those decisions. Because private schools tend to have fewer students and be more streamlined administratively than public schools, how and what the principal does is open to the purview of their entire community. This level of accountability raises the expectation and likelihood among the school community that goals will be accomplished.

The underlying motivation for a move to the private sector is expressed in the phrase "you get what you pay for." According to Weiss (1989), the most important financial sources for private institutions, the quantitative significance of which may vary according to the type of school are: (1) school fees, (2) public subsidies, (3) grants from the providing bodies, and (4) donations. The vast majority of private schools depend on school fees. Hence, Johnson (1987) noted that the lifeblood of almost every private school is the fees charged to parents. Johnson suggested that the fees for particular pupils may in some cases be partially or wholly paid by the central government or the local authority. These payments are in effect aid to parents rather than aid to independent schools. Therefore the general assumption is that it is parents who largely control the supply of finances to these schools. Many private schools are, however, not richly endowed.

In schools with no governing body, the headteacher combines the roles of owner and manager of the enterprise with the role of leading professional at the school. In schools where the head was the appointee of a governing body, he or she, with the bursar whom the governing body also appointed, had the responsibility of preparing an annual budget for the school (Johnson, 1987).

Private schools accomplish their goals with minimum of interference and resource misuse. They do not encounter the myriad of bureaucratic problems that beset public schools. They have good organizational structure and so are able to provide a successful learning environment for disadvantaged students (Schneider, 1989).

Summary

Different countries adopt different strategies to provide resources for education. In many developing countries, however, more money is needed than what the governments are able to provide. Such governments are adopting policies of decentralization to provide an administrative framework within which the communities can provide additional resources. One way of effecting this policy is financial decentralization. There are a number of arguments advanced against the full utilization of this policy and its intended benefits. A major argument is that without the real transfer of authority away from the centre, new resources are unlikely to come forth. Thus arguments are put forward in favour of central allocative authority, for example, that it reduces the effect of disparities in local tax base from which school districts derive their main income. In spite of the arguments for centralization, many countries are adopting decentralization policy in the provision of educational resources.

Whatever strategies are adopted to provide educational resources, problems are encountered in educational financing. Among these problems, there is under-investment in education. There is a misallocation of resources. And there is inefficient use of resources. These problems notwithstanding, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America are adopting various strategies to provide for education. The local communities are being called upon to participate, and there are varying degrees of success among the various countries. These attempts are confronted with economic constraints which seem to curtail the overall benefits.

A number of assumptions underlie the current national situations that are characterized by inadequate resources. For example, in spite of the countries' philosophical underpinnings, it is only the national capacities that can make their educational systems function. To expand these capacities, such countries need to explore always whatever means appropriate to mobilize resources particularly for primary and secondary education. Among the strategies is a reallocation of educational resources, for example, a reduction of the expenses on higher education in favour of basic education.

It is also important to consider the role which site-based management can play in the efficient utilization of resources. The policy, if efficiently used, can assist school-based authorities to make sensible financial and organizational decisions. It helps schools to allocate resources in ways that address their educational needs. The granting of school-based decision-making authority should, of course, go with accountability. School authorities need to demonstrate that they are operating their schools in conformance with state statutes, that school funds are being used as intended, and that students' performance are improving in accordance with state goals.

Finally, private individuals, groups and organizations also provide education. Private schools are those financed by specific sections of the community. This is done in order to satisfy educational needs of some members of the community, but it also helps to tap all available resources, and through that provide a much needed help to the state in providing for education. Such private assistance has both supporters and detractors. While some people hold the view that private schools reduce the government's money for education, other citizens believe that parents contribute additional money for education as a whole. These arguments notwithstanding, private schools continue to operate side-by side with the public schools.

CHAPTER THREE

PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FINANCING IN GHANA: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE II

There is no simple and right answer as to how much money to provide for education, how best to raise that money, how best to provide it, or how best to use it in schools. These are questions that require and deserve public attention and debate.

B. Levin & J. Young (1994, p. 140)

This chapter deals with the second part of the two-part review of the literature. It focuses on governance policy issues that have evolved in Ghana, particularly from the 1960s to the 1990s and their outcomes. First, the review examines the role which past governments have played in the formulation of policies within which provisions of education resources have been made. The need for decentralization and the unsuccessful attempts made to decentralize the governance structure and the reasons for their failure are outlined. During the evolution of the decentralization-devolution policy, the Ghana government has been the major partner in the provision of educational resources to the present day.

Second, the review describes the current structures within which the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service, together with other partners, including the communities led by their District Assemblies, the private sector, and foreign agencies, are providing for education. The review outlines what has been achieved from the educational reforms that started in Ghana in 1987. Third, a descriptive outline of the measures taken, including the mobilization of funds, monitoring and objectives for the reforms is presented. Finally, the review briefly describes the major problems encountered in the implementation of these policies. Such a review is aimed at providing some understanding of the policy framework in which the study has been conducted.

Traditional Approach to Planning in Ghana

The traditional approach to planning for development in Ghana has been national in scope and sectoral in nature. This approach, being top-down and highly centralized, has sought to define national goals and objectives and to formulate national development plans from the perspectives of a few staff of ministries and other central government agencies, without any consultation with or participation of the people who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the plan (Local Government, 1994, p. 21). This structure, it has been observed, has a number of drawbacks in the sense that it is insensitive to community aspirations and opportunities for local development initiatives. It also inhibits integrated analysis, synthesis and action and represents a limited and partial approach to solving development problems. It hardly explores the interactive nature of development problems. Above all it lacks the participation of the local people in the planning process. These observations, which had been recognized for years, called for courageous action without further delay if national development was to be sustained. As Nsarkoh (1991) pointed out, an authority imposed from without is not always a true authority. In line with many modern administrative reforms, such reforms necessitated the participation of the beneficiaries of social services, particularly in the provision of education. This process implied decentralization -- an administrative restructuring that would extend participation to the grassroots.

Today decentralization, as a policy, has become almost a house-hold word that has evolved over the years from the stage of power delegation to devolution currently being effected. The policy of decentralization has taken various forms including delegation (giving authority to field units of the same departments), deconcentration (transfer of only minimum power), and devolution (legal deposit of power to local authorities), the form currently being attempted in Ghana. The policy, as currently being pursued in the country, refers to "an inter-organizational transfer of power to geographic units of local government lying outside the command structure of central government" (Eghan and Odum, 1989, p. 78).

In Ghana, devolution, otherwise referred to as political decentralization, has meant the conferment of legal powers to discharge specific functions upon formally constituted local agencies or bodies. Under this administrative structure the determination of policies and supervision of certain functions are transferred either to political sub-divisions or local bodies (normally elected by universal adult suffrage) within the context of a unitary state control of local affairs (Conyers, 1989; Rondinelli et al. 1990). The units under this form of decentralization acquire a measure of autonomy; and they exercise powers which fall within their jurisdiction. The units also gain legitimacy from the unique local political system over which each government exercises some jurisdiction. In addition, they normally recruit their own staff and have independent sources of revenue (Smith, 1985; Conyers, 1989; Adamolekun, 1991). Such policy has evolved in Ghana over the past three decades.

Evolution of the Devolution Policy in Ghana

The administrative history of Ghana indicates that the British colonial rulers established a centralized administrative structure at the national headquarters of Accra from where directives were issued to the people through the native authorities. Through the system of indirect rule in Ghana (then Gold Coast), the British made use of decentralized structures in the form of native administrative institutions to elicit some degree of local participation (Asibuo, 1992, p. 65). These early attempts at local administration centred around a chief or some unit of local royalty which was not, however, well defined (Ministry of Local Government, 1994). The main interest of the colonial government was to provide some limited involvement of the native authorities in local administration by helping to maintain law and order. Therefore even under the highly centralized administration there was some amount of participation by the local people.

A new development arose when municipalities were established in the coastal towns through enactment of the Municipal Ordinance in 1859. Under a new Ordinance passed in 1943, town councils were set up for four major towns: Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi and Cape Coast. These town councils developed further into municipal councils in 1953. Following political independence from Britain in March 1957, the country's administration passed on to the natives. A Local Government Act (Act 54) was passed in 1961 effecting significant changes in the previous colonial administration. In all of these pieces of legislation, the distinction between the Central Government and Local Government was maintained. There were two different machineries for the administration of Ghana: one based at the capital with branches at the local (district) level and the other, separate and distinct, based in well-defined localities and referred to as Local Government (Ministry of Local Government, 1994). Under the limited responsibility of the government, provision of social services such as education up to university, and health care became the primary responsibility of the central government.

The central government branches and agencies at the local level dealt with national matters. The local government bodies were vested with authority specifically for local matters, and they grew up side by side with the Central Government agencies that operated at the local level. They were required to provide municipal services and amenities in their localities irrespective of whether or not they had the resources to deliver them. One problem was that these agencies lacked personnel with the requisite skills and professional expertise. They were unable to raise funds to meet their obligations and to attract competent officers. Consequently "the local government bodies succeeded only in creating for themselves an unpleasant image, in most cases, of ineptitude and incompetence" (Ministry of Local Government, 1994, p. 3).

The local administrative personnel had less clearly defined powers in terms of local responsibilities, and hence referred to Accra for most decisions to be approved before implementation. Under these circumstances decision-making in matters of significance to a Ministry in Accra took an unduly long time to get sanctioned. Thus as Tordoff, cited in Ayee (1992, p. 3) explained, the so-called "local government" units as described under the 1969 Second Republican Constitution functioned as units of deconcentration (local administration) because they remained extensions of the central government -- which guided, controlled and influenced their activities.

A number of problems developed as a result of this dual hierarchy of administration (national and local). Among these problems were that:

1. The central government agencies encroached upon the rights and responsibilities of the weaker local government bodies. Resources were duplicated between local government agencies and central government bodies, were not fully utilized, and were partially wasted.
2. The various administrative bodies went their ways without sufficient consultation with each other. The limited resources available to each were therefore dissipated without the required impact expected by reason of the size of the input in personnel and material resources.
3. The sharp distinction between central and local government agencies only served to create a poor and distorted image of local government as a corrupt, inefficient and worthless relation of central government. This development did not inculcate in the citizens the civic relationship which would enable them to see themselves as part of the whole system of government and administration.
4. The large number and small sizes of the local councils made it difficult for the local government bodies to raise enough revenue to finance municipal services delivery including education.

The entire system of administration operated against a background of duplication and confusion, of ineffectiveness and slow development at the local level, together with disorientation in the minds of the people, and the resultant dichotomy in the administrative system. In this state of affairs, the administrative system called for a complete overhauling. Indeed as early as 1949 and thereafter, several Committees and commissions of inquiry had been set up to review the administrative structure and recommend reforms. Outstanding among these were the Watson Committee (1949), Sir Coussey Committee (1949), Sir Sydney Philipson Commission (1951), Sir Frederick Boune Commission (1955), The Greenwood Commission (1957), The Regional Constitutional Commission (1957), The Akuffo-Addo Commission (1966), The Mills-Odoi Commission (1967), and the Constituent Assembly (1969). All these bodies made conclusive recommendations for the devolution of central administrative authority to the local levels. This restructuring, of course, depended on the commitment and goodwill of the political and administrative officials, the top civil servants. Most of these recommendations bordering on decentralization were accepted, but were not fully implemented. Thus many previous attempts at utilizing decentralization policy to improve the delivery of government policies, programs and services did not yield results because at every stage in the policy development, some bottlenecks were encountered.

Reasons for the Failure of Past Decentralization Attempts

A number of factors have posed as formidable impediments to the past attempts at decentralization in Ghana. One point to bear in mind in the current attempts at decentralization is that the policy involves far more than simply declaring a policy of bottom-up decision-making, reorganizing the administrative structures, and establishing local planning procedures. Moreover, the implementation of a policy is not merely a technical process of executing pre-conceived plans but a dynamic and unpredictable process of political interaction. No one may therefore assume that once a policy is promulgated, the intended goals will be achieved in an apolitical and mechanical efficient manner (Asibuo, 1992). A brief historical outline of the main reasons for the failure of decentralization attempts over the years is given below.

The Colonial Period (1844-1951)

Administration in the colonial period was highly centralized, with the result that the government was remote from the people. As a means of giving greater reality to local self-government, the various commissions set up to review the administrative structures proposed the maximum devolution of power by the central government to the regional administrations. These proposals were not fully implemented.

The Nkrumah Regime (1951-1966)

It was expected that the first African government under Kwame Nkrumah would make the required efforts to implement the decentralization policy. The Convention Peoples Party (C.P.P.) government did not feel deeply committed to the Greenwood reforms which aimed at remedying the fragmentation and financial weakness of the local councils. The fragmentation also seemed to be motivated by other factors such as the size and inaccessibility of the larger district councils. The people felt considerably detached; communal interest which was an underlying principle of the Coussey reforms was destroyed. From 1960 onwards there was no effort at decentralization. The First Republican Constitution of 1960 vested the president with enormous powers, and this enabled him to assume a great deal of ministerial powers. The C.P.P. in requiring total loyalty, rejected the validity of local representative councils. Decentralization was therefore not tolerated by the C.P.P. The local authorities during this era were in a miserable state in the sense that they were brought under the rigid control of the centre. Amonoo, cited in Asibuo (1992) lamented that the local authorities had no control over their functions but simply did what they were told to do.

.c2.The First Era of Military Rule in Ghana (1966-1972)

The C.P.P. government was removed from office by the military in February 1966. Decentralization as a strategy for development gained public interest during this period under a new government of the National Liberation Council (N.L.C.). A separate Ministry of Rural Development was created to emphasize the government's commitment to the welfare of the rural people. A commission, the Mills-Odoi Commission, appointed to review the structure and remuneration of public services in Ghana, found the government highly centralized in Accra, the national capital. The Mills Odoi Report (1967) therefore recommended that:

> . . . in order to improve efficiency and to provide a machinery of government better designed to accomplish programs for rapid social and economic development, there should be radical decentralization of many of the functions undertaken by the central government.

The implementation of the Mills-Odoi proposals was, however, opposed by conservative elements within the Civil Service on the grounds that they were too radical and unfamiliar. The top civil servants therefore pleaded for a complete rejection of the proposals. Instead of decentralization, the top officials favoured delegation of powers to the regional and district authorities. Some heads of departments did not like the idea of decentralization because they felt it would weaken their grip on their regional and district subordinates (Nti, 1975). They perceived decentralization as a partial loss of their power and privileges. The N.L.C. was succeeded by a new civilian government of the Progress Party (P.P.).

The Second Republic Era (1969-1972)

The Progress Party (P.P.) government that ruled during this period was committed to rural development and so accepted decentralization in principle. It did not, however, demonstrate the political commitment necessary to make it work. Decentralization was opposed by three powerful groups closely connected with the centres of decision-making. The policy was seen as a threat because it would reduce the influence and prestige of parliamentarians at the local level (Asibuo, 1992). The effect of decentralization was that it would make constituents more dependent on the District and Local Councils and other decentralized agencies for development projects than upon the parliamentarians. Hence they (parliamentarians) felt they would not be able to claim credit for bringing development projects to their localities.

The central ministry's bureaucrats also opposed decentralization because they felt it would undermine their influence and make them lose close supervision over their field staff. Cabinet ministers also opposed decentralization because they thought it would make them lose power and influence as a result. According to Awotwi (1973), decentralization under the Second Republic lost its momentum, because the P.P. government inherited policies which had to be assessed in relation to its own objectives and priorities. This notion necessitated a critical appraisal of the financial cost that the implementation of the decentralization program would entail in relation to the cost of other top priority programs. Full implementation of the inherited decentralization proposals would have meant considerable expenditure, for example, in providing infrastructural facilities and other logistic support required for setting up more decentralized agencies.

The National Redemption Council/ Supreme Military Council Era (1972-1979)

A new military government of Ghana, the National Redemption Council (N.R.C.), revived the issue of decentralization which had received little or no commitment from the P.P. government. Even though provisions were made under the auspices of the N.R.C., that government failed to establish Regional Councils throughout the period it was in office. This was again due to lack of political commitment to the decentralization program (Asibuo, 1992). As economic and political conditions deteriorated, the military government feared that setting up these councils could provide a fertile ground for organized opposition to the regime. The decentralized program was also undermined by the uncooperative attitude of senior civil servants. There was a considerable difficulty in some District Councils largely because top officials of regional ministries and government departments were reluctant to accept the redefinition proposed in the new local government system. They were also reluctant to accept their relation with the District Chief Executive (D.C.E.) as a political head of the district, and other heads of departments. As result they failed to instruct their district officers to work through the D.C.Es.

Asibuo (1992) observed that:

> Most of the problems arose because there was insufficient understanding of the provisions of the reforms and the new roles expected of both the councils and district civil servants. Moreover, the reforms were hastily instituted without any careful assessment of what should be the personnel establishment of the various decentralized departments and agencies. Furthermore, the machinery of government during the NRC period, according to the Okoh Commission, was characterized by excessive centralization. (p. 70)

The Provisional National Defence Council Era (1981-1992)

The Provisional National Defence Council (P.N.D.C.) took over the civilian administration in December 1981. Like the previous regimes, it found that the machinery of government was highly centralized at the national capital resulting in a situation whereby several administrative issues at the local level had to be referred to the central ministries. This situation not only delayed the execution of local development projects, but also stifled development initiatives in the districts.

The P.N.D.C. dissolved the existing District Councils and replaced them with Interim Management Committees. It also set up the Kuffour and Sowu Committees (both in 1982), and the Public Administration Restructuring and Decentralization Implementation Committee (PARDIC) in 1983 to work on the various aspects of the decentralization program. The current decentralization initiatives being effected were largely the results of PARDIC's proposals. The PARDIC was charged with (1) working out modalities for nationwide implementation of the ministerial restructuring and decentralization program, (2) assisting in the implementation of the program, and (3) arranging public education back-up for the program, among other things. The work of this committee culminated in the decentralization of 22 government departments including the Ghana Education Service (GES) in 1987 (PNDC Law 207).

Most of PARDIC's recommendations towards decentralization were accepted by the government. The P.N.D.C. established District Assemblies in all the 110 political districts in 1987. The Assemblies were new administrative structures created to support the decentralization of government machinery at the district levels. The process was intended to embrace the people at the local level through allocating specific functions to: (1) Town/Area Organizations, (2) District Organizations, (3) Regional Organizations, (4) Ministerial Organizations and (5) National Coordinating Organizations. As a result of these recommendations, the structure of government machinery and district development, as noted by Aryeetey, Boakye, Awua-Boateng, and Dotse (1989, p. 44) was made up of (1) Office of the P.N.D.C., (2) Ministerial Organization, (3) Regional Administration, and (4) District Administration. Consequently, each Ministry has four main divisions: Policy Planning, Programming and Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation; Research, Statistics and Manpower Development; Information Management and Public Relations; and General Administration.

The restructuring of the Ministerial Organizations was extended to the Regional Administration. Each Regional Administration has two divisions: Administration and Development Programs, each headed by a Director. Under the District Administration each district has the district assembly, the highest political and administrative body in the district. The objective of creating these assemblies was to extend the restructuring exercise beyond the Regional Administration to the district level. Each assembly has an executive committee with five sub-committees for (1) Economic Development, (2) Social Services, (3) Technical and Infrastructure, (4) Justice and Security, and (5) Finance and Administration. Educational matters peculiar to the district are presented first to the Social Services Sub-Committee which submits them to the assembly for debate and for a decision to be taken. Education matters are not supposed to be referred to the regional or the national headquarters any longer. With the coming into existence of the 1992 Constitution that ushered in the Fourth Republican government of National Democratic Congress (N.D.C.), decentralization is being implemented under the N.D.C. administration.

The Fourth Republic Era: The Government of the National Democratic Congress (January 1993 to Present)

The Fourth Republican government of Ghana came into being on January 7, 1993 under the 1992 Constitution that was submitted to a national referendum for rectification by the people of Ghana on April 28, 1992. The National Democratic Party emerged as a ruling party in the 1992 national elections under the 1992 Republican Constitution, the fourth of its kind in Ghana. The Fourth Republican Constitution, unlike its predecessors, devotes a whole chapter (Chapter 20, Sections 240-255) to the issue of decentralization and local government.

Section 240 (1) stipulates that "Ghana shall have a system of local government and administration which shall, as far as practicable, be decentralized." Section 240 (2, p. 150) makes the following provisions:

(a) Parliament shall enact appropriate laws to ensure that functions, powers, responsibilities and resources are at all times transferred from the central government to local government units in a coordinated manner;

(b) Parliament shall by law provide for the taking of such measures as are necessary to enhance the capacity of local government authorities to plan, initiate, co-ordinate, manage, and execute policies in respect of all matters affecting the people within their areas, with a view to ultimately achieving localization of those activities;

(c) there shall be established for each local government unit a sound financial base with adequate and reliable sources of revenue;

(d) as far as practicable, persons in the service of local government shall be subject to the effective control of local authorities.

It is, however, not sufficient to make constitutional provisions to identify what local governments under decentralization are supposed to accomplish (Nsarkoh, 1992). Nsarkoh reiterates that matters to be considered in determining which service can become a local government responsibility should include: (1) the complexity of the service, (2) the ability of the local authority to carry it out, and (3) the financial resources available to the local authority to carry it out.

The lack of financial resources is an important issue underlying the success of decentralization. Local government authorities who desire to exercise power under a decentralized system must not constantly look up to the central government, but must be able to rely on their own resources as far as possible. This is because the central government's grant-in-aid will come with the attendant central control; and he who pays the piper will have to call the tune. Some significant structures have been proposed in the education sector to streamline the processes under which provisions are to be made for education.

Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Education

Under the current devolution policy in Ghana, the Ministry of Education, as under the previous system, is responsible for the overall management of education in the country. The Ministry has a number of statutory bodies which together form the Education Sector (Ministry of Education, 1994). These bodies are responsible for the implementation of the Ministry's policies and programs. The bodies include the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.), constituting the largest organization under the Ministry. It has the responsibility of implementing pre-university education programs. About 80 percent of the Ministry's annual budget is allocated to the G.E.S. Other bodies that operate under the umbrella of the Ministry are the Ghana Library Board, the National Service Secretariat, Ghana Book Development Council, Ghana Institute of Languages, the Non-Formal Education, Ghana National Commission for Unesco, the West African Examinations Council, the National Council for Tertiary Education responsible for the universities and other tertiary institutions.

Based on the Public Administration, Restructuring, Decentralization and Implementation Committee (PARDIC) guidelines, the Ministry now has a Chief Director and three specialized line directorates namely: (1) Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation (P.B.M.E.); (2) General Administration and Finance; and (3) Statistics, Public Relations, Information Management and Research. The fourth is the Directorate of Manpower, Personnel Policy and Management which was expected to be established later.

An Executive Council has also been established as part of the Minister's Secretariat to assist in the formulation of policies in the Education Sector. The Council is composed of the Minister of Education, Deputy Ministers of Education, Chief Director of Education, four Line Directors, Director-General of the G.E.S., and Co-Ordinators for Non-Formal Education and Tertiary Education.

The functions of the Executive Council are:

- To brief members on the state of implementation of programs/projects in their respective Directorates/Divisions of the Ministry
- To discuss achievements and programs
- To present position papers on specific issues for discussion.

Another significant structural innovation in the Ministry is the integration of all the separate Program Management Units which have been managing educational projects being funded by the World Bank and other Donor Agencies into a single projects Management Unit. It has one co-ordinator who works under the supervision of a Deputy Minister (Ministry of Education, 1994).

A Ministerial Advisory Board has been established within the Ministry to: (1) promote constant interaction between the Ministry and its implementing agencies, and (2) to advise the Minister on adjustments in policy direction, planning objectives and operational strategies. Members of the Board comprise heads of all the statutory bodies under the Ministry.

The Ministry's current major responsibility is to implement the Education Reform Programs initiated in 1987 (Botchwey, 1994, 24). The following major policies are being pursued:

1. Providing all children of school going age with basic education of nine years (six years primary and three years junior secondary).
2. Expanding access to all levels of education especially at the basic level.
3. Improving the quality of education to make it more relevant to the social and economic needs of the country.
4. Vocationalize education and offer the opportunity for practical acquisition by shifting emphasis from an academic to a more problem-solving and technical system.
5. Rationalize education at the tertiary level to ensure relevance to national development and cost effectiveness in the use of manpower and resources.
6. Ensure sustainability and quality of education through reduction of waste and cost of education through strengthening of vital units of the overall management and planning of education.
7. Reduce literacy rate at the rate of a minimum of 10 percent per annum.

Under the new structure, deputy ministers assigned to subject matters do not see themselves as holding special portfolios. They consider the Ministry as a holistic institution. They form part of the Minister's Secretariats with one command structure. No issues are taken up at a higher level without reference to the Minister.

The Chief Director plays a co-ordinating role and all directors are expected to respect the chain of command about the reporting relationship within the Ministry. The Policy Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (P.B.M.E.) formulates policies as they affect the Sector for consideration by the Ministerial Team. The various implementing agencies submit periodic reports to the Ministry to enable it carry out its responsibility. At the same time the P.B.M.E. is responsible for all the three facets of education viz: basic, higher and non-formal education.

Policies which affect the Ghana Education Service receive advice and professional expertise from educational planners and analysts in their evolution before they are finalized for submission to the Minister. The Project Management Units currently backing the Education Sector Reform Programme perform an implementation function. To eliminate the unnecessary waste of manpower and resources and duplication of functions, the three Project Management Units have been integrated into one management under the direct supervision of the Minister.

Regional Directors of Education

Each of the current ten administrative and political regions of Ghana is headed by a regional director of education within the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.). Each region in turn is divided into a number of administrative and political districts. For example, Central Region is divided into twelve educational districts and each district is also headed by a director under the decentralization program.

According to the G. E. S. Director-General's circular G.E.S./HQ/PG.573/20 dated 5th August, 1991, sent to heads of department, a regional director is responsible for:

1. Resolving problems of professional nature arising from the performance of functions which cannot be resolved in the educational districts. Problems that cannot be resolved by the regional director are referred to the Director-General.
2. Approval of inter-district transfers of teachers.
3. Overall control and rationalization of recruitment and endorsement of recruitment forms for all appointments into the G.E.S. within the regions.
4. Appointment of assistant heads and senior housemasters of senior secondary schools and teacher training colleges.
5. Submission of recommendations for the constitution of Boards of Governors of senior secondary schools and teacher training colleges to the Director-General, taking account of the recommendations of district education officers as appropriate.

The circular states in paragraph 5:

> It is expected that within the limits defined for the decentralization process, Regional Directors and District Education Officers will exhibit maximum co-operation which would bring about increased morale and efficiency of teachers in the teaching/learning process.

District Education Officers

District education officers also hold the rank of director as is the case with the regional Directors. They are charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Appointment and posting of heads of primary and junior secondary schools.
2. Intra-district transfer of teachers holding ranks up to the grade of principal superintendent. Inter (across) district transfers should be cleared with the regional director.
3. Intra-district transfers of non-teaching staff holding grades up to administrative assistant/assistant accountant and analogous grades. Inter (across) district transfers should be cleared with the regional directors.
4. Representations of the G.E.S. on Boards of Governors of senior secondary schools.
5. Promotions up to the grade of senior superintendent; actual letters of promotions are signed by the district education officers personally.
6. Promotions up to the grade of senior accounts clerk and analogous grades in accordance with the Scheme of Service for the Non-Teaching staff; letters of promotion will be signed by the district education officers personally. Promotions to the grade of administrative assistant/assistant accountant should be cleared with the regional director.
7. Submission of recommendations for the constitution of Boards of Governors for the appointments of heads, assistant heads and senior housemasters of senior secondary schools to regional directors.

Regional Managers of Education Units

Regional Managers have responsibilities towards the Mission Education Units. They have been assigned a number of responsibilities in addition to their own routine management, supervisory and administrative activities. Those responsibilities are discharged in close consultation and collaboration with District Education Officers. They are as follows:

1. Posting of newly trained/appointed teachers to schools in their Units. In this process, Regional Managers submit the names of teachers to be posted and the schools to which they are being posted to the District Education Officers for the actual letters of appointment to be issued to them.
2. Transfers of teachers (intra- and inter-district).
3. Applying the Code of Professional Conduct for the teaching and non-teaching personnel, taking account of the operations of district and regional disciplinary committees.

Central Government Funding of the Education Sector

The Central Government is responsible for financing over twenty-five sectors of the economy. Of these sectors, five are of strategic importance which require that they be given priority in resource allocation. These sectors are (1) Food and Agriculture, (2) Education, (3) Health, (4) Roads and Highways, and (5) Works and Housing. Accordingly these five sectors constitute 55 percent of the sectoral expenditure in Ghana. Consequently, only a substantial increases in resources will ensure that other sectors are not crowded out (Ministry of Finance, 1994). The Education Sector alone accounts for about 34 percent of the total national recurrent expenditure reflecting Government's stance on educational policy. The bulk of the money allocated goes into the payment of teachers' salaries. The Ministry of Finance observes:

> In spite of an increasing share of the country's total recurrent expenditure going to the Education Sector, there has been persistent over-expenditures arising from the need for Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) to recruit teachers for the newly established schools, subventions to the Universities and the National Service Scheme. . . So much was spent on personal emoluments that there were just not enough funds allocated . . . for the procurement of teaching materials and for the maintenance of educational infrastructure. Also the rehabilitation of Second Cycle Institutions takes a large proportion of the sector's development budget (47% in 1993). (p. v)

The Ministry of Finance reports that a review of the Education Sector's expenditure for the past years shows an increased share of the country's total recurrent budget going to that sector. The education sector has currently eleven divisions (See Tables 1 and 2). The central government's allocation for the various divisions of the Ministry of Education for recurrent expenditure in 1994, for example, amounted to ¢12.4 billion (Table 3).

Development funds allocated to Education in the same year (1994) amounted to ¢9.8 billion (Table 7). Education's share of the recurrent budget rose from 27 percent in 1984 through to 33 percent by 1987, and 34.7 percent by 1990. Table 4 provides a picture of the recurrent budgetary allocation to Education from 1987 to 1993. Table 5 compares the total education budget allocation within the same period in relation to total public expenditure and Gross Domestic Product. The relatively large percentage of the national revenue provided for the education sector alone seems to support the notion that that the government's educational provision has been stretched to a far end and that other options for providing money for education might be advisable. While all aspects of education demand adequate financial allocation, not only to maintain them but to improve upon their services, the present trends require that total budgetary allocation for the Education Sector over the years is being increasingly utilized for personal emoluments leaving very little amount of resources for operation and maintenance.

The Ministry of Finance, therefore, cautions:

> Considerable progress has been made to improve the policy framework for maintenance activity in the sector, but a great deal more needs to be done, otherwise huge investments in educational infrastructure financed in the last six years will be run down in the near future. (p. 39)

The Ghana government committed 38 percent of the national budget to education, thus making Ghana the only country in West Africa to spend so much on education. This has won the admiration of several donor agencies who have pledged a total of two billion US dollars to the Education Ministry (Ghana Drum, 1993b, p. 17). In 1994, the Ministry of Education submitted a request of ¢190.26 billion as against the 1993 approved level of ¢137.60 billion.

The proposed expenditure is expected to attain two policy objectives:

- To ensure that all children of school-going age will be in school by the year 2000;
- To reduce illiteracy by 10 percent per annum.

The bulk of the sum allocated to the sector will go to pay the salaries of teachers. In 1994, apart from over 20,000 National Service personnel posted to teach, the Ghana Education Service proposed to add 9,347 teachers of various grades to its staff strength of 169,000.

Table 1

ALLOCATION PATTERN OF EDUCATION RECURRENT BUDGET BY LEVEL AND TYPE

LEVEL/TYPE OF EDUCATION	AMOUNT (In Millions)						PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION					
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
PRIMARY EDUCATION	8,616.20	14,045.90	15.650.20	22.341.00	28,341.00	51.647.00	27.87	32.97	30.54	31.30	34.38	37.53
JSS/MIDDLE EDUCATION	6,906.50	8.501.50	8,536.50	11,522.40	11,375.80	20,836.50	22.34	19.96	16.66	16.01	13.80	15.14
SECONDARY EDUCATION	3,500.20	4.596.20	5,552.00	7,870.00	8,079.50	15,000.40	11.32	10.79	10.83	10.93	9.80	10.90
TEACHER EDUCATION	598.00	670.30	1,682.00	1,195.50	1,186.90	4,846.00	1.93	1.57	3.28	1.66	1.44	3.52
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION	398.90	282.00	1,200.30	776.10	668.20	1,269.40	1.29	0.66	2.34	1.08	0.81	0.92
TECHNICAL EDUCATION	215.80	*	*	*	*	*	0.70	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SPECIALIST TRAIN. EDUC.	442.80	558.60	620.20	*	*	*	1.43	1.31	1.21	0.00	0.00	0.00
INST. OF HANDICAPPED	149.60	174.80	183.10	260.80	268.80	516.80	0.48	0.41	0.36	0.36	0.33	0.38
HIGHER EDUCATION	2,320.30	4,759.00	5,387.00	6,834.80	12,910.60	13,159.80	7.51	11.17	10.51	9.50	15.66	9.56
POLYTECHNICS & DIPLOMA INST.	*	*	*	1,370.60	1,541.60	1,085.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.90	1.87	0.79
MANAGEMENT & SUPERVISION	167.10	246.60	276.30	420.60	398.50	767.10	0.54	0.58	.54	0.58	0.48	.56

Table 2

ALLOCATION PATTERN OF EDUCATION RECURRENT BUDGET BY LEVEL AND TYPE

ADMINISTRATION	AMOUNT (In Millions)						PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION					
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
MINISTRY OF EDUC (HEADQUARTERS)	1,602.90	1,817.20	3.370.40	5,430.20	5,681.80	8,860.50	5.19	4.27	6.58	7.54	6.89	6.44
BUREAU OF GHANA LANGUAGES (MOE)	28.40	*	*	*	*	*	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
NON-FORMAL EDUC	*	*	*	520.00	751.40	801.30	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.72	0.91	0.58
PBME*	*	*	*	30.00	18.60	52.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.02	0.04
SUPPLIES & LOGISTICS	*	*	*	100.00	82.60	130.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.10	0.09
GHANA EDUC SERVICE (HEADQUARTERS)	4,648.40	5,157.90	5,669.90	8,960.90	6,857.50	10,733.80	15.04	12.11	11.06	12.45	8.32	7.80
GHANA EDUC SERVICE (REGIONAL)	1,279.20	1,792.10	3,114.70	4,153.60	4,203.40	7,810.00	4.14	4.20	6.08	5.77	5.10	5.67
NATIONAL ARCHIVES	39.50	*	*	*	69.10	113.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.08
TOTAL	30,913.80	42,601.10	51,242.10	71,977.10	82,435.30	137,628.10	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

*PBME -- Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Source: Ministry of Education Estimates, 1993

Table 3

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
1994 SUMMARY OF RECURRENT EXPENDITURE
BY PROGRAMMES & OBJECTS (In Thousands)

HEAD	SUB HEAD	PROGRAMMES	TOTAL RECURRENT EXPENDITURE
140		MINISTRY OF EDUCATION	12,454,607
	01	General Administration	11,224,926
	02	Bureau of Ghana Languages	*
	03	Non-Formal Education Division	932,481
	04	Planning, Budget, Monitoring & Eval.	182,000
	05	Supplies and Logistics	*
	06	NACVET	115,200
141		GES HEADQUARTERS SERVICES	12, 534,368
	01	General Administration	4,598,893
	02	Manpower & Training Division	477,588
	03	Curr. Research & Dev. Division	122,612
	04	Inspectorate Division	79,016
	06	Secondary Education Division	3,064,256
	08	Teacher Education	101,820
	12	Supply and Logistics	445,509
	13	Basic Education	3,024,820
	16	Special Education Division	125,965
	17	Accra Technical Training Centre	188,118
	18	Kumasi Technical Institute	305,771
142		GES SCHOOLS & REGIONAL SERVICES	139,979,780
	01	General Administration	10,561,660
	02	Primary Education	71,425,131
	03	Junior Secondary School	28,683,157
	04	Secondary Education	20,051,268
	05	Teacher Education	6,581,985
	06	Management and Supervision	1,032,516
	08	Vocational Education	1,644,063
143		GES -- SPECIAL SERVICES	671,024
	02	Institutions of the Handicapped	671,024
145		TERTIARY EDUCATION DIVISION	21,349,511
	01	General Administration	18,476,688
	02	Polytechnics	940,303
	03	Diploma Colleges	384,501
	04	Distance Education	1,548,019
TOTAL			186,989,290

Table 4

RECURRENT BUDGETARY ALLOCATION TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

TOTAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET AND PERCENTAGE OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE) RECURRENT BUDGET TO TOTAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET: 1987-1993 (Million ¢)

YEAR	TOTAL NATIONAL RECURRENT BUDGET	MOE RECURRENT BUDGET	PERCENTAGE OF NATIONAL BUDGET
1987	80,583.00	25,357.80	31.47
1988	111,004.00	34,635,90	31.20
1989	148,643.00	42,601.10	28.66
1990	198,193.00	51,242.10	25.85
1991	255,209.00	71,977.1o	28.20
1992	331,771.70	82,435.60	24.85
1993	493,200.00	137,628.10	27.91

Table 5

EDUCATION (RECURRENT AND DEVELOPMENT) IN RELATION TO TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND GDP AT CURRENT PRICES IN PERCENTAGES, 1987-1993

YEAR	TOTAL PUBLIC EXPENDITURE	GDP AT RECURRENT PRICES	PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AS % OF GDP (CURRENT PRICES)
1987	26.5	3.6	13.7
1988	25.7	3.5	13.6
1989	24.3	3.4	13.8
1990	23.6	2.9	12.4
1991	22.3	3.5	15.9
1992	39.2	3.9	9.8
1993	22.0	6.0	27.5

Source: Ministry of Education: Annual Estimates, 1993

These were all new teachers made up of (1) fresh Certificate 'A' teachers; (2) new degree holders and diplomates; and (3) reinstatement of teachers who left the classrooms to find job avenues outside the sector or outside the country; and (4) G.C.E. Advanced Level holders. In addition to recurrent expenditure, the Ministry of Finance allocates funds to finance development projects in education.

Development Expenditure

In 1992, the Education Sector was allocated ¢5.4 billion for funding its development projects. It received ¢6.4 billion in 1993 for development (Table 6). In 1994 the Sector was allocated ¢9.80 billion (Table 7) for development projects, as against ¢190.26 billion allocated for recurrent expenditure. Today there is a widespread demand on the central government to do more for education in Ghana. This demand appears to receive the government's attention. There are indications that the government is making good endeavours in educational development. The Minister of Finance (1994, p. 26) in his budget statement to Parliament of Ghana indicated that in the year 1994, about 550 additional primary schools were to be opened throughout the country, particularly in the remote areas. Facilities in some of the existing schools were also be rehabilitated.

Table 6

Development Funds Allocated to Education in 1993
(¢6.4 Billion)

		Amount (¢ Billion)	% Share
a.	Rehabilitation/Construction of Buildings Furniture & Equipment for Second Cycle Institutions	3.0	46.9
b.	The Four Universities	2.6	34.3
c.	First Cycle Educational Institutions (Junior Secondary Schools)	0.06	1.0
d.	Various Subvented Institutions under Ministry of Education	0.78	17.8
	Total	**6.4**	**100.0**

Source: Min. of Finance Public Expenditure Review 1993, p. 42

Table 7

Development Funds Allocated to Education in 1994

(¢9.80 billion)

		Amount (¢ Billion)	% Share
a	Second Cycle Institutions Projects	4.2	43.9
b.	The Four Universities	3.3	34.0
c.	First Cycle Educational Institutions	1.2	12.1
d.	Various Subvented Institutions under Ministry of Education	1.1	11.0
	Total	**6.4**	**100.0**

Source: Min. of Finance Public Expenditure Review 1993, p. 43

The Ministry of Finance Report (1994) indicated that the rehabilitation and construction of buildings, etc. for second cycle institutions received ¢3 billion (46.9 percent) of the total education budget of ¢1.81 billion (33.5 percent) for 1993 (Table 3) which was more than what it received in 1992. The universities almost maintained their percentage share with a slight decrease from ¢1.87 billion (34.6%) in 1992 to ¢2.2 billion (34.3%) in 1993. The First Cycle Educational Institutions' allocation of 1.7% in 1992 went down to 1.0% in 1993. So was the share of Subvented Institutions reduced from 30.2% (¢1.63 billion) to 17.8% (¢0.78). Compared with the ¢6.4 billion approved development budget for education in 1993, an indicative allocation of ¢9.80 billion was made for the Ministry of Education in 1994. This represented an increase of 53.13 percent over the 1993 approved allocation.

In line with the policy of the Ministry of Education, the second cycle institutions continued to receive a greater proportion of the education budget. The figures (Table 4) indicate that 43.9% (¢4.2 billion) of the ¢9.80 billion was earmarked for second cycle institutions projects in 1994. The universities' share of the budget went down slightly from 34.3 percent in 1993 to 34.0 percent in 1994 on account of the World Bank funding major part of the rehabilitation works at the universities. The first cycle institutions also had an increase in their allocation from 1.0 percent of the education budget in 1993 to 12.1 percent in 1994. Out of the education sector allocation of ¢9.8 billion, an amount of

¢4.358 billion went into district projects while the remaining ¢5.443 billion went to National projects. The bulk of the funds going to the district projects totalling about ¢4.358 billion was absorbed by the second cycle educational institutions.

The budget allocation for second cycle educational institutions included ¢400 million matching funds for community secondary school projects supported by the World Bank/I.D.A. There was an amount of ¢700 million for first cycle institutions in respect of Primary School Development Project which the World Bank/African Development Bank were involved. The World Bank/A.D.B. also undertook to rehabilitate/construct the tertiary (i.e. universities and polytechnics) buildings. The government of Ghana was requested to contribute an amount of ¢1.0 billion towards the project.

The Report (1994, p. 44) indicates that "with the decentralization of payments to the Regions and Districts in 1992, the Ministry of Education (M.O.E.) was unable to monitor the progress of work on the projects. Warrants signed in the Regions and Districts were not reported to the M.O.E. headquarters, with the result that M.O.E. was unable to capture such expenditures. It therefore requested that a mechanism be put in place such that warrants from the District/Regions would be reconciled with those from Headquarters, and a quarterly report submitted to the Ministry of Finance. Indeed, as Bacchus (1980) cautioned elsewhere, it may be misleading to take the total sum expended by the Ministry of Education since some of these sums may not be spent on educational projects at all.

Educational Reforms and the Budget System

For the purposes of central and local governments, a budget is the financial expression of a plan of national and local (District) authorities to effect a qualitative and quantitative change in the living conditions of the people within their national and local boundaries. For school districts, financial management includes many interrelated functions which ultimately demonstrate that the revenue and expenditures of the district support the best educational programs possible, given the fiscal resources available. The major components of financial management include: (1) budgeting procedures; (2) financial-accounting procedures; (3) purchasing, warehousing, and distributuing procedures; (4) investing procedures; and (5) auditing procedures (Travers & Rebore, 1987, p. 256). In Ghana, before 1988, the basis for the preparation of the local authority budget was derived from Section 65 of the Local Administration Act, 1971. Among other things, the Act required every District Council to submit to the Regional Council detailed estimates of its revenue and expenditure for the ensuing year at a time and in a manner as the Regional Council may direct. The Regional Council would then consider the submitted estimates which it might approve or disapprove in part or whole. If the estimates are not approved, the District Council may authorize by resolution recurrent expenditure at the levels in force at the end of the previous year. The Regional Councils were not, however, established. Therefore the Regional Administrative Officer became the approving authority.

Under the new reforms, (P.N.D.C.L. 207) every district is required to institute a composite budget, an integral district budget which synthesizes and harmonizes expenditure and revenue expenditure and revenue estimates of the programs of all the decentralized departments operating in the districts as distinct from sectoral budgeting which characterized the National Budget System. Section 63 of P.N.D.C.L. 207 states that:

1. Every District Assembly shall, before the end of each financial year submit to the Regional Co-ordinating Council a detailed budget for the District stating the revenue and expenditure of the District for the ensuing year.
2. The Regional Co-ordinating Council shall collate and co-ordinate the budgets of the Districts in the Region before submission to the Council (Government).
3. The budget for a District shall include the aggregate revenue and expenditure of all departments and organizations under the District Assembly, the Office of the District Assembly and the District Administration, including the development plans and programs of the departments and organizations under the Assembly.

The above provisions presupposes that the Assembly would still depend on the acceptance or otherwise of a higher body before it could implement its financial decisions under the new system which requires financial decentralization. Under the decentralized system, the national financial administration continues to be governed by the Financial Administration Decree (F.A.D.) of 1979 (Supreme Military Council Decree 221). The local government financial administration is governed by PNDCL 207. The F.A.D. makes the Ministry of Finance the primary authority for the preparation, publication and control of the national budget. At the same time there are Financial Administrative Regulations that make the Controller and Accountant General's Department with offices in some Districts, the principal disbursement agency of the government.

Each Local Government has a Local Treasury which checks its revenue and expenditure alongside the Central Government Treasury of the Controller and Accountant-General's Department at the district level. With these institutions it is quite clear that fiscal decentralization that would empower district authorities to control expenditure in accordance with local priorities, albeit subject to clear accountability, is not fully in place.

The Ministry of Local Government (1994) points out that although fiscal decentralization is yet to be fully resolved, three modest steps have been implemented. These are: (1) the merger of the Central and Local Government Treasuries at the District level into one Treasury designated the Office of the District Assembly Treasury; (2) the decentralization of award and payment of contracts up to ¢250 million to the District level; and (3) the establishment of District Tender Boards under Legislative Instrument 1503 of 1990. The District Assemblies have also been empowered to generate revenues from any available local resources with which they would perform the functions transferred to them from the central government. These include rates of various types such as basic rates (pool tax), property rates; fees from slaughter houses, market dues, market stalls, trading kiosks, etc.; licenses from a host of items and activities including dog license, hotels and restaurants, beer and wine sellers, petroleum installations, etc. It also includes trading services such as cement and flour sales, lands and courts. The assemblies also receive central government transfers as grants-in-aid (revenues transferred from Central Government sources to the assemblies) and "ceded" revenue (revenue from sources which were hitherto tapped by the Central Government, but which Central Government has "ceded" to the district assemblies, in pursuit of decentralization). These sources include entertainment duty, casino revenue, gambling tax and taxes from the registration of trade, business, profession or vocation. Apart from these sources of revenue, the assemblies are required by the Constitution of the Fourth Republic to establish a District Assemblies Common Fund to which shall be allocated not less than five percent of the total revenue of Ghana payable in quarterly installments for development. Other financial arrangements are made to generate more revenue such as taxes from lotto operators, royalties from timber and mineral development as well as grants-in-aid-from agencies and companies operating in areas of jurisdiction of the Assemblies.

In all these efforts at mobilizing development funds, good plans and organizations have to be set in motion in order to generate adequate resources. The resources to be provided have to be budgeted for to determine the relationship between the inputs and the expected output (Dotse, 1992). In practice, the District Assemblies appear not to generate enough revenue to undertake the responsibilities assigned to them, particularly the financing of development projects, including the provision of educational infrastructure. The problem they are facing is not, however, that of merely dealing with inadequate revenue, but even more importantly, the use to which they put whatever amount of money that comes into their coffers. It is generally acknowledged that the assemblies have inadequate resources, but to this persistent problem, Nsarkoh (1991) points out, should be added the problem of lack of effective control of their own expenditure. In some cases there is inadequate audit of local authority accounts, which may facilitate the misappropriation and misuse of local authority funds. There is a lot of room for accountability, and how monies are currently being used raises many questions. For example, the Auditor-General's report released in 1992 after the Assemblies' accounts had been audited stated among other findings:

> Expenditure analysis of the Assemblies indicates that they could hardly undertake development projects on a large scale, the bulk of expenditure having been incurred on administrative expenditure and staff costs. Some of the District Assemblies could hardly spend more than 15 percent of the total revenue collected on development projects although the main function of the District Assemblies are expected to be the formulation and execution of development programs under Section 6 of P.N.D.C. Law 207. (p.3)

Community Participation in Education

Community participation and decision-making at the grassroots level form the cornerstone of the District Assembly concept (Siita, 1992). This participation, of course, includes the provision of educational services. Hence under the structural adjustment programs, District Assemblies are expected to direct the efforts of the people to contribute to educational costs. The P.N.D.C. Law 207 of 1988 clarifies and legalizes community involvement by making the District Assemblies a pivot in the provision of services for the local community. A Local Government (Agona District Assembly Establishment) Legislative Instrument, 1988, for example, enumerates 86 specific functions that district assemblies are charged to perform. Sections 40 to 42 which pertains to educational provisions specifies that it shall be the duty of the assembly:

40. To build, equip and maintain all public primary, middle (now junior secondary) and special schools as are in the opinion of the Secretary [Minister] for Education, after consultation with the Secretary [Minister] responsible for Local Government, required in its area.
41. To advise the Secretary [Minister] for Education on all matters relating to primary and middle schools and such other matters as may be referred to it by the Secretary for Education.

42. To be responsible for:
    - (i) postings and transfers within its area of authority of teachers including pupil [untrained] teachers;
    - (ii) keeping records of teachers;
    - (iii) discipline of teachers in accordance with the disciplinary code laid down by the Ghana Education Service;
    - (iv) appointment of school welfare officers;
    - (v) recommending teachers for study leave;
    - (vi) appointment of headteachers in accordance with rules laid down by the Ghana Education Service;
    - (vii) supervision of primary and middle schools;
    - (viii) formation of education committees;
    - (ix) collection of statistical data and other information;
    - (x) in-service training for pupil teachers;
    - (xi) nursery school education;
    - (xii) approval for opening of private primary and middle schools;
    - (xiii) payment of teachers' salaries from funds made available by government;
    - (xiv) indenting for the supply and distribution of textbooks;
    - (xv) disbursement of Education Grants.

Hence, the head of Education in a district, the District Director of Education, looks up to the Assembly for approval of any local educational policy that may be formulated for schools in the public system. Private schools established by private individuals and organizations operate side by side with the public system.

The Role of Private Schools

Private schools play an important role in the development of education in Ghana. The government, through the Ministry of Education, encourages the establishment of schools by private entrepreneurs to cater for the primary and secondary education (Ghana Education Magazine, 1993). Private participation in education in Ghana is vital for the country's development, since the government alone is unable to meet the educational needs of the entire population. The majority of private institutions in Ghana are at the primary level. There are plans to liberalize the tertiary level education to enable private individuals or corporate bodies to set up institutions in that sector too.

Private schools have made an enormous contribution in laying a very solid foundation for children who enter secondary school (Ghana Education Magazine, 1993). The best of these schools are heavily patronized by the upper and middle class parents who make tremendous financial and material contributions for their upkeep. A good number of the private schools are run by churches, companies, institutions and individuals. Most of them, however, lack sufficient financial support which tends to undermine their efforts at creating more effective teaching and learning conditions.

Due to the business setting of private schools, private primary education is highly competitive in terms of results. According to the Ghana Education Magazine (1993), community interest in a particular school depends largely on its academic performance and examination results. Proprietors and heads of schools are very strict in applying supervisory rules and regulations. Incompetent and lazy teachers can be removed at a very short notice or without warning. Parent-Teacher Associations show very keen interest in the overall school activities.

The Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) has instituted a program by which qualified and trained teachers are seconded to private schools for a period ranging between two to four years. But many private schools lack good and adequate infrastructure, textbooks, teaching aids, library, equipment, tools, typewriters and other secretarial machines. The Ministry of Education and the G.E.S. have drawn up guidelines by which private schools can gain recognition and approval to operate. Recognized schools are issued with the approved syllabuses and textbooks for which they pay textbook user fees. Inasmuch as private schools have important roles to play in education, the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) has instituted measures to assist them to play their roles meaningfully. For example, the GNAT provides staff development programs, good monitoring and good conditions of service and ensures the enrollment of qualified staff.

Another important source of funding to improve education in Ghana is that obtained from foreign agencies.

The Role of Foreign Agencies

Foreign donor institutions have provided significant funding for some specific educational projects. For example, a total of 14.7 million US dollars credit was obtained from the World Bank to support communities to provide basic physical facilities for the 143 newly established senior secondary schools (S.S.S.). With this assistance, the Ministry of Education helped the communities to provide 836 structures consisting of 149 two-classroom units with library and textbook stores, 159 combined units of staff rooms and offices, 298 staff houses, and 91 generator shelters on cost-sharing basis (Ghana Education Magazine, 1993). In effect, each of the 143 new senior secondary schools was to receive two additional classrooms, staff common room, a head's office and a store, two staff houses, a library with two stores, and a generator shelter for schools not connected to the national electricity grid. Under these arrangements, the government was to provide two-thirds matching fund to deprived communities while district assemblies were expected to provide the remaining one-third.

In April 1993 the government negotiated with the World Bank a Credit Agreement involving 65.3 million US dollars to finance a primary school development project. The objective of this project was to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the primary schools. The project had a life span of four years and involved (a) the construction of 10,977 classroom pavilions (roof-on-legs) for 1,983 most deprived primary schools across the country; (b) the construction of two-bedroom houses for headteachers of the beneficiary schools; (c) re-roofing of 1,546 classrooms; (d) increasing actual teaching hours from four to five hours a day; (e) eliminating all fees that were not officially approved by the Ministry of Education but which were imposed on primary school children; (f) ensuring that district education officers did not arrange functions or school activities for teachers during official school teaching hours; (g) involving communities in the selection of headteachers; (h) orientation of key district officers and community leaders from each school area; and (i) training and retraining of 1,983 headteachers in school level supervision. The British Council and the Volta Aluminum Company also provided a van each to the Ghana Library Board to facilitate the Board's mobile service.

It has become evident in the previous sections that various organizations and institutions are making efforts to provide the resources for education in Ghana. The total efforts of bodies could be strengthened through strong parnerships in which the role of each partner would be recognized. Such recognition is likely to remove obstacles that curtail the efforts of one partner through the act or ommision of another partner.

The Structure of Partnerships

The provision of educational resources in Ghana requires so much cost consideration that today it is not possible for any one organization to meet the costs. Therefore, various institutions and organizations must come together to form strong partnerships to pull the resources together. This linkage takes the form of collaboration in which every partner strives to play its role effectively. Hite and Drummond, cited in Neale, et al. (1981) define collaboration as involving some sharing of planning, decision-making and resource utilization. They observe that collaboration is the central process that makes partnerships succeed. And if such collaboration must be true, then it must include a sharing of power, sharing in the planning, organization, operation and evaluation of programs, and sharing in the commitment of resources. Although each partner maintains an autonomous identity, for the purposes of the partnership, each yields some autonomy in the pursuit of partnership goals.

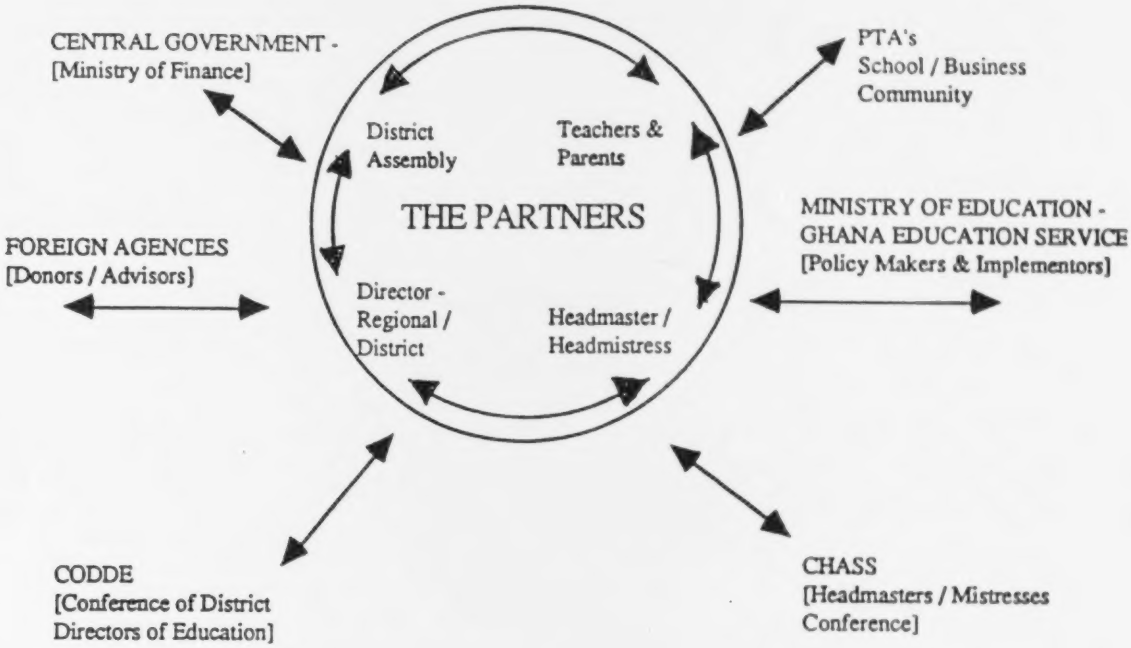
Each organization in the collaborative venture maintains its own organizational independence and identity. As Neale et al. (1981) remarked, in the building of partnerships, there is an agreement among the parties to collaborate in some enterprise. Each willing partner takes on a different role, and once the various roles have been clearly defined, each partner is expected to contribute to the mutually shared goals with each receiving appropriate shares in the outcomes of the collaboration.

A Summary of the Structure of Partnerships in Ghana

A summary of the structure of current partnerships in the provision of public education, as identified in the literature, is provided in figure 1. Within the circle are various organizations forming linkages that are actively working at the local level to provide adequate resources for education. Currently these linkages are formed by the district assemblies, district director of education, the school-based administrator, teachers and parents. Each organization, of course, represents a larger organization that actively performs outside the circle. Thus in the school plant, the district assembly represents the central government's interests in education. The central government provides the assembly with the legal backing to make and implement appropriate educational decisions to achieve objectives that are consistent with the national goals. The government also provides some funds through the Ministry of Finance to support the assembly's endeavours.

The regional and district directors of education, as the professional heads of education in the regions and the districts, should effectively manage education as well as monitor its progress. Directors should be able to count on the moral support from the conference of directors at the local and national levels. Headmasters and directors are schools administrators who are more directly accountable in the schools' programs than other partners. Therefore, a stronger collaboration is always expected among them. In the same vein, teachers in the classrooms need to collaborate closely with parents. Teachers and parents together should also count on the support of the PTA, the school and business community. The Ministry of Education (policy makers) and the Ghana Education Service (policy implementors) work hand in hand to establish appropriate education goals for the nation.

Today, globalization requires that nations pull resources together to provide social services. Hence, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service would require to work closely with foreign agencies who would not only provide support in funding, but also provide expert advice in educational programs. Such advice must of course take into consideration the nation's peculiar circumstances in order not to create unforeseen hardships for the nation.


CENTRAL GOVERNMENT -
[Ministry of Finance]
PTA's
School / Business
Community
District
Assembly
Teachers &
Parents
THE PARTNERS
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION -
GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE
[Policy Makers & Implementors]
FOREIGN AGENCIES
[Donors / Advisors]
Director -
Regional /
District
Headmaster /
Headmistress
CODDE
[Conference of District
Directors of Education]
CHASS
[Headmasters / Mistresses
Conference]

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION FINANCE

Adapted from Neale, Bailey & Ross (1981, p.40)

Figure 1

Some Outcomes of the Current Educational reforms

The 1980s were characterized by movements for educational reform on an international scale, and the rate of change does not look like abating in the 1990s (Simkins, 1992). In defining educational reform, Simkins stated:

> By educational reform we mean a substantial and systematic attempt to change the content, structure and/or power relations in an educational system by legislative means with a view to achieving educational improvement. Major reform attempts have two essential preconditions. First, there must be a strongly held view within government that something is wrong with education, and sufficiently wrong to make a major legislative program worthwhile. Second, there must be a degree of consensus among those who can legislate about possible solutions. (p. 3)

From this perspective, a description of Ghana's educational reform and its outcomes are outlined. In the 1980s it became evident that the quality of education provided in Ghana's school system had deteriorated considerably, and that adversely affected the quality of manpower produced. A number of factors were evident to support this notion. Among them were an acute shortage of books, deterioration of equipment and other teaching materials and educational infrastructure, irrelevant school curriculum, a rather long duration of pre-university education, reduced access to education and an increasing drop-out rate. The Education Sector had fallen short by 1986 when needs ranging from chalk through exercise books to textbooks suffered acute shortages (Ghana Education Magazine, 1993).

The government at the time, recognizing this precarious situation, introduced measures in 1987 to address the educational problems, manpower needs and the low literacy rate. A reform program was designed to run through the entire educational system from basic and secondary to tertiary. The reform involved changes in the structure and content aimed at improving access, equity and quality of teaching and learning. According to Kwabena Kyereh, the Deputy Minister of Education, the aim of the educational reform program was to produce pupils of high quality who would be functional in society, gain access to tertiary education, and to prepare the youth to meet the challenges of the fast changing conditions of living throughout the world (Freiku, 1994).

The success of the reforms largely depended on the availability of adequate funds. Consequently the government increased its budgetary allocation to the education sector. In addition, foreign assistance was sought from donors like the World Bank which provided considerable support for education. The precarious situation of education was laid before the donors during a Social Sector Co-ordinating meeting in Vienna, Austria. Subsequent to that meeting, over 170 million US dollars have been mobilized to support Ghana's reform program. The program, however, seems to have started from the top rather than from the bottom. And Dery (1994, p. 5) maintains that "it is ironic that education reforms should have started from the top in spite of all the foreign consultants and local experts whose services the nation paid for."

Measures Taken to Implement the Policy

In the first phase of the reform, an Education Sector Adjustment Credit (EdSAC I) was adopted. The emphasis at this stage was on the implementation of the nation-wide junior secondary school (J.S.S.) program that had been launched in 1987.

In the second phase (EdSAC II), a negotiation was made between the Ghana government and the International Development Association (I.D.A.) of the World Bank in April 1990, to provide further assistance for the Reform Program. EdSAC II was designed specifically to implement the second phase of the reform program, and to support the preparations required to place the first cohort of the J.S.S. graduates into the restructured three-year senior secondary schools (S.S.S.). The EdSAC II was also mounted to assist with the Economic Recovery Program (E.R.P.) which had been launched in 1987.

Later on, the Community Secondary School Construction Project (C.S.S.C.P.) was started in 1991. Its objective was to strengthen the basic infrastructure for the newly established senior secondary schools. As a supplement to the C.S.S.C.P., eleven additional schools were allocated some construction projects. As an important component of the C.S.S.C.P., the Ministry of Education was expected to supply a means of transport (usually a truck) to each of the new senior secondary schools to facilitate their smooth implementation. As a condition for receiving the vehicle, each community was required to provide a decent place of convenience out of its own resources. By the end of 1993, 35 schools had benefitted from such arrangements.

In 1992, a Literary Skills Project was designed to support the non-formal education programs. Its objectives were: (1) to enable the government to communicate adequately to the population, its programs such as the Economic Recovery Program, and rural development strategies; (2) to give the people the necessary consciousness, attitudes, skills and knowledge so that they could participate fully in the national development. In the second phase, measures were taken to improve the quality and efficiency at all levels of education and to encourage financial sustainability of the new system.

Efforts Made to Improve the Reforms

Overall, the following activities were undertaken in furtherance of the reform policy that took off in 1987 (Ghana Education Magazine, 1993):

1. A new three-year senior secondary school program was introduced.

2. A new curriculum aimed at making secondary education more relevant and functional while maintaining its academic base, was developed for the new senior secondary schools. Teaching syllabuses for forty-two subject areas were written. The new program emphasized vocationalization and other selected subject options. Technical education received a high profile. One hundred and twenty (27.5%) out of the existing 436 secondary schools began specializing in technical subjects. The percentage of students studying technical and vocational subjects thus moved from 10.69% in 1987 to 50% in 1993. The content of textbooks were developed and made relevant, functional and more suitable for the enhancement of socio-economic development.

3. The length of pre-university education was reduced from 17 to 12 years. In order to ensure that the already low quality of education did not deteriorate further, a number of measures were introduced:

    (i) the employment of untrained pupil-teachers was banned;

    (ii) post-middle school teacher training colleges were all phased out. General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) Ordinary Level (O.L.) was set as the minimum qualification for entry into the post-secondary teacher training colleges;

    (iii) pupil-teacher contact hours were increased by increasing the basic education year from 36 to 40 weeks, and secondary school year from 33 to 40 weeks. This measure was taken to compensate for the reduction in number of years spent at the pre-university level.

4. All secondary school teachers and newly recruited National Service personnel were given intensive in-service training courses to prepare them to teach adequately the newly designed curriculum. All heads of secondary schools underwent in-service training to deepen their understanding of the content of the reforms and to broaden their scope with regard to other practical aspects of teaching and management.

5. By the end of 1993, the number of teachers in the system were:

    Primary School: 133,379
    Junior Secondary School: 51,794
    Senior Secondary School: 9,245

More junior secondary schools were established. In the 1993-94 academic year, 134 junior secondary schools were established to admit more students. Thus the total number of junior secondary schools in the 1993-94 academic year was 5,341 (Ghana Drum, 1993d). The Ministry of Education started working towards the provision of 1,200 more places in senior secondary schools in 1994. The essence of making more places available in the senior secondary schools was to minimize "wastage" among candidates who qualify from the junior secondary schools (Ghana Drum, 1993a, p. 27).

6. Large quantities of teaching and learning materials and equipment, developed and procured to cover all subject areas, were supplied or were due to be supplied to all schools. It was envisaged that when all textbooks commissioned for printing had been delivered, all senior secondary schools students would receive sufficient textbooks to achieve a 1:1 distribution ratio. Efforts were also being made to provide adequate teaching and learning materials to improve the quality of instruction and teacher effectiveness. Also efforts were being made to restructure the management and administrative systems to ensure more efficiency and co-ordination geared towards improving the school system. Consequently a program for strengthening the District Education Offices continued with the appointment of 85 District Education Officers with the rank of Director out of a required total of 110. The remaining 25 were to be appointed shortly afterwards. In addition, a circuit-based monitoring system was developed to monitor the reforms at the school level, and to provide feed-back to the Ministry. This plan was revamped by the appointment of qualified and competent professional supervisors as circuit officers. Two hundred and thirty-five circuit officers were appointed, trained and posted to the education circuits.

7. At the beginning of 1991, all secondary Forms 1, 2 and 3 classes were replaced by the new senior secondary Forms 1, 2 and 3 country-wide. By January 1991, 1,384 classes existed in the 397 senior secondary schools. An additional 17 classes were established in the 12 new senior secondary schools set up at that time. This addition brought the total number of senior secondary classes to 1,401, with a total enrollment of 54,742.

8. A Curriculum Evaluation Specialist was hired to undertake the strengthening of the Curriculum Research and Development Division (C.R.D.D.) and to initiate study to evaluate the senior secondary school curriculum.

9. New secondary schools were started in all educationally deprived areas in the country. This was aimed at achieving the objective of providing access to higher education to many more people and to make education as equitable as possible within specific

constraints. As a result, a distribution of at least two senior secondary schools to a district was achieved. This achievement enabled the Ministry of Education to offer secondary education to about 165,000 out of basic education graduates by January 1993.

10. By July 1993, over seven million copies of basic textbooks had been distributed to all primary schools. For the junior secondary schools, 220,000 books had been supplied. The objective of the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) was to attain a target of one pupil to a textbook in the near future. It was observed that the Junior Secondary School (J.S.S.) Program had a very strong book and vocational base and that if pupils did not read, then there was no way they could make good grades.

11. Contracts were awarded for the reprinting of J.S.S. textbooks while awards for the printing of new primary school textbooks were approved. New textbooks in English and Mathematics were to be distributed to the schools in due course. For the senior secondary school (S.S.S.) textbooks, a lot of progress was made. For example, textbooks on S.S.S. science, agricultural science, chemistry, biology and metal work were supplied in sufficient quantities. Also English, government, history, typewriting and management in living textbooks were adequately covered.

Another objective of the reform was to institute measures to eliminate drop-outs from the system.

Eliminating Drop-Outs

The Ministry of Education formulated a policy aimed at removing the disparities in Ghana's educational system at the primary level and more especially, to ensure a reduction in the frequency of female drop-outs. For example, it was found that 30 percent of school-aged children were not in school while some 50 percent of primary 1 children dropped out before completing primary 6.

The policy comprised eight pilot projects that sought to remove such disparities by making education accessible to distressed groups and retain school-age children in the schools (Ghana Drum, 1993b, p. 17). The projects included scholarship for girls, instructional materials and free textbooks that would enable students to own their textbooks, and a remote area incentive package in the form of motor-bikes for headteachers and bicycles for teachers. The policy intended to make use of parents as instructors, as well as provide school libraries and housing projects. Under the policy, the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), parents, churches and interested groups were invited to team up with the Ministry of Education to carry out a systematic awareness campaign to educate parents and citizens in general to enroll all school-aged children in primary schools.

Monitoring

A survey under the auspices of the Ministry of Education was undertaken from February to March 1992 into the S.S.S. system when admissions into the S.S.S. were still in progress. According to the results of the survey:

1. There had been a general improvement in the approved student-teacher ratio for various programs in many schools. The highest level of compliance at 98 percent was in the Agricultural sector and the lowest was 58 percent in the General (Arts) Program.

2. The Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) accepted for full implementation the decentralized plan for District Education Officers, and most districts started the process of appointing Assistant Directors as the schedule officers for co-ordinating the overall supervision of teaching and learning in the districts, and ensuring that an appropriate action was taken on reports submitted by circuit officers.

3. The reforming of technical institutes as originally planned was still outstanding. However, an action plan for the reform of Technical and Vocational Training for Self-Employment and Rural Development was being implemented as a pilot scheme in all regions. It was expected that if the scheme proved successful, sufficient resources could be mobilized to continue the program to ensure that more post-senior secondary school apprentices were prepared for self-employment.

4. A textbook user fee of ¢250 introduced in the 1991/92 school year was maintained at the basic education level. At the S.S.S. level, however, the amount of ¢4,500 textbook user fee had to be increased to ¢6,000 in January 1993 in view of the rise in the exchange rate of the cedi. A J.S.S. examination fee was fixed at ¢6,680 per term per student. Out of this amount, the government paid ¢4,180 while a student paid ¢2,500. The S.S.S. examination fee, like the G.C.E., Ordinary level was ¢13,500 (Ghana Drum, 1993c, p. 24).

However, according to Ghana Drum (1995a, p. 34), the Ministry of Education, decided that, with immediate effect, pupils in primary schools would not pay any textbook user fees. Students in junior secondary schools were, however, to pay ¢500 a year while students in senior secondary schools were to pay ¢9,000 a year. The new fees were in accordance with the government's goal to achieve a free compulsory universal basic education by the year 2005.

5. In March 1992, all secondary boarding schools were given formal approval to charge ¢200 per student per day to cover the full cost of food.

Examinations

In 1990, 127, 522 pupils sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E.). Out of this number, only 42,000 entered S.S.S., and out of the 42,000, only 1,345 passed for entry into the university. This created in effect, 126,230 unskilled and unemployable Ghanaians aged between 15 and 19 years. In 1991, 149, 031 students sat for the B.E.C.E. out of which only 49,078 actually entered S.S.S. showing a failure of 67.07 percent. In 1992, 54,618 out of 165,359 candidates who sat for the B.E.C.E. actually entered S.S.S., a failure of 66.67 percent. Thus in four years of the program implementation to the terminal level, some 441,912 pupils sat for the B.E.C.E. out of whom only 145,956 gained entry into S.S.S. In August 1993, a total of 181,824 candidates wrote the B.E.C.E. at 662 centres throughout Ghana. This number represented 10 percent increase over the previous year (1992) number of 165,359. With the results of the S.S.C.E. observed, only about 1,345 were eligible to sit for the university entrance examination.

Final examinations were conducted by the West African Examinations Council (W.A.E.C.) on behalf of the Ghana Education Service. The subjects of the examination were English Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, General Science, Life Skills, Technical Drawing, Basic Technical Skills, Vocational Skills, Ghanaian Languages and French (Ghana Drum, 1993b, p. 17).

In November 1993, about 50,000 registered candidates from 438 senior secondary schools (S.S.S.) in the public school system and 16 private schools wrote the first Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (S.S.C.E.). Briefing courses were held for heads of all S.S.S. in the country to ensure a smooth take off of the examinations and to minimize problems associated with entries. On the provision of teaching, Lartey (1994a, p. 14) pointed out that teachers were not well-trained and science equipment was being left in some obscure schools in the interior to rot away. He noted that "it is not the number of subjects that matter but the human and material facilities available to these students to cope with the conditions in which they have found themselves." It was also observed that the dismal performance of students in the examination was due to late arrival of textbooks, lack of motivation on the part of teachers and students' apathy to the system. At a conference held at the Accra International Conference Centre to evaluate the performance of the first batch of the S.S.S. students in their final examination, one student asked, "Can you imagine that it was four months to the examination that the government provided text books? Are we magicians?" (Ghana Drum, 1994a, p. 15). The general consensus was that the whole J.S.S. and S.S.S. programs were mounted in a rush thus leaving the S.S.S. graduates in a dilemma as to the course to take for their future. However, according to the Deputy Minister of Education, Ghanaians were missing the important point that so many students qualified for the polytechnics, teacher training colleges and agricultural institutions and "these could not be described as failures."

In all, candidates were examined in 10 subjects. Each candidate was examined in seven core subjects and three electives. With the exception of physical education which was to be assessed internally only, all subjects were to be assessed both internally and externally. The core subjects were English Language, Science, Mathematics, Agricultural Science, Environmental Studies, Life Skills, Physical Education and Ghanaian Language. Forty-two thousand out of those who sat for the first S.S.C.E. passed in one or more subjects constituting 79 percent passes against 21 percent failures (Freiku, 1994). A candidate sat for 13 or 14 subjects and was expected to pass in at least nine to meet the requirements for admission into the university. The West African Examinations Council instituted an endowment fund to honour the best candidates. A Committee comprising the universities and the Ministry of Education was set up to work out the required standards for admission of S.S.S. students into the universities.

The general impression about the examination was that students' performance was very poor. Lartey (1994) lamented that this year's [1992-93] result of the S.S.S. Examination goes down as one of the worst in Ghana's history in terms of education and made the following observation:

> When he [the Minister of Education] and his N.D.C. [National Democratic Congress] went into the laboratory to cook up what he thought was the best in Ghana's secondary system, they thought that they had the best experiment not knowing that they had not adequately prepared for it.

According to Ghana Drum (1994a, p. 16), the government was called upon to probe into the dismal results of the S.S.S. certificate examination, and to institute a special scheme to re-train all J.S.S. and S.S.S. pupils who were the unfortunate victims of the education system. The universities were expected to meet part of their admission requirements from the senior secondary school graduates.

University Entrance

Under the new system, S.S.S. graduates wishing to pursue undergraduate degree programs in the universities have to sit for university entrance examination (U.E.E.). The maiden U.E.E. for the first batch of S.S.S. graduates was conducted in May 1994 (Ghana Drum, 1994c, p. 9). The examination consisted of a general paper and a special paper which were meant to test candidates' standard of written English, vocabulary, comprehension, verbal reasoning and quantitative aptitudes and standard of achievement in the elective subject areas. The policy was that candidates with passes in three core subjects, namely English, Mathematics and Science in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (S.S.S.C.E.) and any three elective subjects with an aggregate of 24 or better were eligible to sit for the examination. While about 20,000 graduates sat for the examination, only about 5,000 candidates were to be offered admission to the four-year first degree programs in the universities. The U.E.E. constitutes 50 percent of the total marks needed for entry into the universities with the S.S.S.C.E.. results taking the remaining 50 percent. Candidates with the highest S.S.S.C.E. aggregate of 6 were deemed to have obtained 50 percent of the university entrance requirements. The decision to conduct the examination was the outcome of consultations between the universities and the Ministry of education to ensure a smooth integration of the S.S.S. students into the stream of higher and tertiary levels of education (Ghana Drum, 1994c).

Candidates who obtained the basic S.S.S.C.E. requirements, but were unable to pass the U.E.E. in any particular year were offered the opportunity to re-sit the examination at the next offering. Until the General Certificate Examination (G.C.E.) Advanced Level Examinations are completely phased out, candidates with good passes will continue to be admitted into undergraduate studies in the universities based on the present mode of selection of Advanced level students for admission. To ensure fairness in the admission system, the two categories of entrants, the S.S.S. and Advanced level applicants, share equally vacancies declared for university admission until the Advanced level mode of admission is phased out.

Problems Encountered with the Implementation

Analysis of the novelty criterion reference test conducted by the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S.) for primary six pupils in 1992 revealed three major shortcomings in the public school system. These were in the areas of teaching, learning and supervision

(Ghana Drum, 1993b, p. 10). These shortcomings were in part due to a number of problems.

1. Staffing was inadequate, especially for schools offering technical, vocational and agricultural programs.

2. The delivery of some of the textbooks for senior secondary schools was delayed because of the late submission of acceptable manuscripts by some publishers.

3. Some newly established senior secondary schools were not provided with electricity in good time to enable them to prepare adequately in the practical component of the technical program.

4. The projected opportunity for the Community Secondary School Credit Construction Project (C.S.S.C.P.) was not met. The C.S.S.C.P. provided opportunity for flexibility and injection of local initiatives, especially in the architectural drawings, but not compromising the optimum design standards. This opportunity was not fully utilized. Many of the district administrations did not have competent local technical supervisory personnel. However, where they were available and adequate, a lot of initiative was shown.

5. Funds disbursement was a problem because most communities had difficulties in honouring the expected one-third cost. Thus even though the government's two-thirds share of the cost had been paid, in most cases the projects had not been completed.

6. Some districts did not follow the local inspection procedures. Reports from some of the districts indicated that funds disbursed from the Ministry to the district did not always reach the intended recipient in time.

7. Community level public education about the projects did not appear to have been adequately done in many districts. This created a serious gap between the communities, the district administration, heads of schools and sometimes the Ministry of Education. A few communities frowned on their level of participation. Such communities expected one hundred percent government support. Chieftaincy and other personality problems affected program implementation.

8. The location and siting of some of the schools by the communities themselves appeared to create a problem for effective support. Also frequent changes of the personnel at the district administration level was a problem as the incoming officers were not properly briefed on the projects. In a few cases the school project was not a priority of the District Administration.

9. The quality of primary school education was threatened by the inordinately inadequate pupil-teacher contact time. The level of instructional time was low, hence all the essential supportive resources injected into the school system under the reforms did not appear to be achieving the desired results.

10. Some of the printing houses contracted to print books did not deliver the books on time. The G.E.S. was just waiting for them to deliver the copies for rapid distribution.

11. It was difficult to supply adequate textbooks so that every pupil would obtain copies because of distribution logistics, deterioration of books through usage from the six-year period, and the likelihood that a one-to-one ration could not be made available to every school.

12. The problem of lack of adequate equipment and tools for the J.S.S. workshops remained because of inadequate funds.

13. Some headmasters were in the habit of diverting funds meant for developing structures for their school libraries to feed students.

Hence the reforms have been confronted with serious obstacles. Yedu (1993, p. 13) remarked that the more education is reformed in Ghana, the more problematic it became. He pointed out:

> The introduction of the junior and senior secondary school concept was drummed up as the panacea to educational ills. Examination results so far do not suggest any answer to the problem. After this expenditure running into billions of cedis with foreign exchange component and a huge World Bank loan, . . there is a need for another bout of expenditure in the name of reforming the same 'reformed' education.

Djoleto (1994) conceded, however, that despite the drawbacks, credit must go to the country as a whole that the entire system has been put in place. He noted that there was no need to dismantle or sectionally adjust it. Rather, if content, manpower, operational facilities, management and control and finance were provided reasonably in proactive equilibrium, the established system should operate satisfactorily.

In order to review the education reforms, an Education Review Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Professor A. N. deHeer Amissah which had its first plenary meeting on July 30, 1994. The Committee was required to review the arrangement of courses to ensure linkages from primary to junior secondary school and from junior secondary school to senior secondary school (Asare, 1994). It was also to determine the number of compulsory subjects to be taken at all levels, the number of electives to be taken at the senior secondary school level and the issue of students offering French at both levels of schooling, among other matters.

Summary

The governance structure in Ghana had been centralized for many years. Under this structure the central government established branches and agencies at the local level to deal with national and local matters. Such structure produced a number of administrative problems including the encroachment on the local government bodies by the central government agencies, and the inability of the local councils to raise revenue to finance services including education. To address these problems attempts were made to restructure administrative procedures. Several committees were appointed by successive governments to study and make recommendations for implementation. These attempts failed mainly because those expected to effect implementation did not possess the required commitment to support it.

The decentralization policy is currently being implemented largely under the proposals made by a Public Administration Restructuring and Decentralization Implementation Committee appointed in 1983. Arising from these proposals, District Assemblies were established in 1987 to administer the districts. Their role was to supplement the efforts of the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education, like other sector ministries, has a Chief Director and three specialized directorates. It also has a Program Management Unit in charge of educational projects. At the lower levels, the Ghana Education Service has Regional and District Directors of Education who represent the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, and are in charge of local policy formulation and implementation.

Within these structures the central government (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning) provides the bulk of educational funds to the Minister of Education who appropriates such funds to the various divisions under the Ministry of Education. The percentage of the national budget (for recurrent and development expenditure) allocated to education has been increasing over the years. The allocation stood at 38 per cent in 1994. The bulk of educational finances is utilized for recurrent expenditure, particularly, the payment of monthly salaries. Within the expenditures for the educational reforms, the local authorities are expected to support education by performing some functions assigned to them. They are expected to mobilize additional funds to perform such functions. The district assemblies are, however, unable to discharge their functions because of their inability to raise and disburse funds effectively. The bulk of whatever amount they are able to mobilize is used for administrative expenses rather than on development projects.

Since the government and the local communities are unable to provide for education in its totality, private schools are being encouraged to play a complementary role in education, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. These schools are run by the churches, companies, institutions and individuals. The government assists them by seconding trained teachers to teach there for some years. At the same time, foreign agencies such as the World Bank, the Unites States Agency for International Development and the British Council are providing assistance in funding some projects such as new secondary schools, staff houses, primary school projects and means of transport to some institutions within the Ghana Education Service.

The reason for all these efforts is the fall in the quality of education provided in Ghana's school system and thus impairing the quality of manpower produced. Considering the efforts being made by various institutions and organizations, and the fact that the aggregate resources fall much below what is required, there is a need to reconsider the approaches taken to generate resources. And one suggestion is that of working towards partnerships that would recognize the role of each partner. Among the problems noted in the educational reform were acute shortage of books and educational infrastructure, irrelevant school curriculum, long duration of pre-university education, and reduced access to education. To address these problems, a reform program was designed to run through the entire educational system from basic and secondary to tertiary. Such measures of course depended on adequate resources. The government increased its budgetary allocation to the education sector and sought further assistance from foreign agencies like the World Bank. The World Bank assisted by providing an Educational Sector Adjustment Credit to help implement the program.

Among the measures taken in the new program were the establishment of new junior and senior secondary school systems with newly developed curricula. Schools were opened in all parts of the country. Textbooks in all subjects were printed for the schools. New textbook user fees were introduced at all levels. Much later, however, the payment of fees at the primary school level was waved off. School heads and teachers were provided in-service training to upgrade their teaching and administrative skills. Directors with more administrative experience were appointed to head all school districts. Teacher-student ratio was improved. Several new subjects were introduced. In spite of all these measures, however, examination passes have been much lower than expected. Universities were expected to meet their admission requirements partly from the successful senior secondary school candidates. The inadequate number of such successful candidates have, however, presented admission problems to the universities. Thus the reform program continues to grapple with teething problems.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PURSUIT OF THE DEVOLUTION POLICY

> *It is important to spotlight that the transfer of services is only one of the elements of the strategy of decentralizing. The principle objective is to generate conditions so that the decision-making can be taken nearer where the problems occur so that the institutions enjoy a higher degree of autonomy and so that the community has concrete canals [sic] of participation in education.*
>
> Sole (1994. p. 157)

The research involved interviews held with 45 participants (headquarters and district directors of education, assistant directors at the regional and district education offices, school heads, senior school administrators, teachers, parents, community leaders, and other public officials including budget officers, and a public relations officer. In the analysis of the interview data, a number of categories pertaining to the current administrative policies and practices on educational financing in Ghana were derived. A number of themes were generated from these categories. This chapter deals with one of the central themes of the study namely, the operation of the devolution policy. This theme centred on the first four research questions which dealt with (1) the perceptions of policy makers, administrators and stakeholders of the policy under which money and other resources were allocated to schools under the devolution policy; (2) the making of decisions affecting the provision of educational resources by the central government and the local communities, (3) the major areas of expenditure in the provision of pre-university education, and (4) the division of responsibilities between the central government and the local communities.

The theme dwelt on the premise that the availability of adequate resources for pre-university education -- money, educational infrastructure, qualified personnel, etc. -- would be determined, to a large extent, on the operations of the devolution policy. The interviews provided respondents with ample opportunities to describe what they believed was happening.

The results of the analysis of the interview data with regard to the first theme are presented in two main sections: (1) the organization of authority for decision-making in education and (2) the impact of decision-making authority on the provision of educational infrastructure. The first main section is presented in four sub-sections namely, (1) regional and district directorates' authority for decision-making, (2) school-based authority for decision-making, (3) community-based authority for decision-making, and (4) parents' authority for decision-making.

The Organization of Authority for Decision-Making in Education

The authority for decision-making in education is the pivot around which the devolution policy revolves. A major concern of the policy was to provide ample opportunity for people at the lower levels to contribute towards the provision of educational infrastructure, the requisite authority for making decisions in that regard, and the necessary commitment for ensuring the full implementation of such decisions. Respondents described the workings of the policy as they understood it.

Regional and District Directorates' Authority for Decision-Making

All respondents agreed that under the new system, all the 110 education districts in the country had been upgraded to full directorates in addition to the ten regional directorates that existed before the new policy. For this reason, education region and education district, (a district being one of the several divisions of a region) were both headed by directors. The objective, according to many of the respondents, was to provide more qualified and experienced officers at the helm of affairs within the localities, and hence better quality decisions. Four directors at the headquarters of the Ministry of Education noted that Education as a sector ministry had been decentralized. One of them, for example, said:

> Education is one of the sector ministries which has been highly decentralized. In fact, it was decentralized before the government put more emphasis on the decentralization policy. In every village you will see a school, but what we have been doing to strengthen and enforce the decentralization policy is to post more qualified personnel to the districts. All the 110 districts in the country have been decentralized, especially since the educational reform program started. All districts are now headed by directors. Assistant directors have also been posted to the districts to take charge of various areas of education.

Prior to the decentralized policy, school districts were headed by assistant directors. Under the new policy, directors were appointed to replace the assistant directors in the districts. According to one director, before the educational reform program, second cycle institutions were operating under the authority of the regional director of education. Second cycle institutions dealt directly with the regional educational offices. But with decentralization and the resultant strengthening of the district education offices and their upgrading to the status of directorate, second cycle institutions came under the authority of the district director of education. The following are some of the administrative procedures described by one headquarters director and a district director:

> In the past most disciplinary issues were referred to the national headquarters. Now disciplinary committees have been set up in each district for the enforcement of officers' conduct. Sanctions have been prescribed by headquarters, but the enforcement has been delegated to the districts. A number of sanctions can be taken against defaulting teachers at the district level. It is only a few cases like teacher dismissal that have to be referred to headquarters.
>
> On the dismissal of teachers we are able to take decisions, but the final approval has to come from the headquarters, Accra, through the regional director at Cape Coast. For example, last year we had a case where a teacher embezzled examination fees. The disciplinary committee took a decision on his dismissal. The decision was then referred to the regional office. They also took a decision on the case. In the long run, the approval for dismissal had to come from the national headquarters.

One of the reasons for transferring authority from the headquarters to the regions and the districts, according to one director at the Ministry of Education was that:

> At the Planning Division, from the way things were going, we found it necessary to move some of our personnel to the districts to do the monitoring. There are only five of us at the headquarters and we cannot sit here and do everything there. So education is far ahead of most of the sector ministries so far as the implementation of policies are concerned.

Another director at the headquarters dwelt at length on the responsibilities assigned to regional directors and the new district directors, particularly with regard to the posting and disciplining of teachers. He described the procedure for posting teachers as follows:

> District directors manage the education districts. They see to it that teaching, learning, and administration of schools are going on effectively. When it comes to the posting of teachers, normally a list of teachers who pass out from the training colleges is sent to regional directors from the teacher education division of the Ghana Education Service (GES). District directors then send their requests, i.e. the number and types of teachers they need to the regional director. The regional director then submits these requests to the Postings Board of the Teacher Education Division. The Board allocates teachers according to the requests made by the regions and on the number of teachers who passed out from the training colleges. Teachers are first allocated to the regions. The regions, in turn, allocate the teachers to the districts according to the requests made, and the specialties needed by each district. The district director then posts the teachers to schools. Apart from those who have passed out from college, all postings to schools within the district are done by the district director with no reference to the regional director or to headquarters.

This procedure suggests that the district director has authority over some issues, but does not decide conclusively on grave issues such as teacher dismissal. Such decisions have to be referred to a higher authority for approval or otherwise. On disciplinary procedures another director mentioned that:

> Apart from the district disciplinary committee there is also a regional disciplinary committee. So if a teacher is not satisfied with a decision of the district committee, he can appeal to the region, and from there, the case may come to the headquarters. With regard to interdiction, if the need arises for that to be applied on the spare of the moment, the district director can do it and inform the headquarters. This is because if something serious occurs and a teacher has to be removed immediately from the school, we shouldn't wait till the matter comes to the headquarters. By then the damage might have been caused already, but that is not dismissal. When a teacher's name has to be removed from the register of teachers, that must also come to the headquarters. If a teacher is to be suspended for some months, that also has to come to the headquarters.

Thus from the national headquarters directors' perspectives, the transfer of authority for decision-making, as envisaged by the devotion policy initiators, had been firmly put in place. Three regional directors and four newly appointed district directors also had the opportunity to describe how the system was working within their administrative jurisdictions. All of them, together with their assistant directors, confirmed that under the new system, both the region and the district were headed by directors. They were asked to explain the relationship between the regional director and the district director of education. One district director's explanation was:

> Originally we were all expected to be of the same rank, but you know, we have that in-fighting where somebody will like to maintain superiority over others. So regional directors are now referred to as divisional directors. Directors at the headquarters are also divisional directors and have the same rank as those in the regions. But obviously, director is a director, only that some are more experienced; we should accept that fact. For example, when I was at (Name of school], I was an assistant director. The headmaster too was an assistant director, but he was superior to me because he was the head and I was the assistant. So although both of us were directors, in terms of the job and what we were required to do, the head ranked higher.

In the view of another district director, however, under the new policy, even though regional and district educational heads were both in the rank of director, the district director was still under the regional director. The district director took advice from the regional director. He cited an example from the on-going exercise of remedial classes where district directors were given instructions to appoint centre directors for the remedial centres. These appointments were to be forwarded by all district directors through their regional director to the director-general for approval before payment of emoluments was made. The regional director was thus seen as a coordinating director. One district director mentioned the role of the Director-General, head of the Ghana Education Service, and observed that professionally their boss was the Director-General to whom all directors were directly responsible. Two district directors spelled out the administrative process as follows:

> The regional director coordinates all districts' activities under his region. A lot of things pass through his hands, for example, for uniformity in our region we meet the regional director who, in effect, is a divisional director (we meet him quarterly) to co-ordinate our activities. For example, when it comes to regional sports, we cannot operate on individual basis and go straight to the national sports festival. So the regional director is in charge of regional sports. We are 110 school districts in the country plus ten regional directors. If all these officers were to meet the Director-General individually, it may not be all that effective. Every district has one centre for remedial courses. From these centres we individually send our reports to the regional director. Then the regional director goes to Accra as a representative of all the 12 districts in the region. That is an example of how the regional director coordinates activities in the region.
>
> One aspect of the decentralization policy is that we, the district directors of education, are advisors to the district chief executive (DCE) who is the political head of the district on education. Whenever an educational problem occurs within the district, the DCE comes to consult me. At the same time I attend district assembly meetings as an ex-officio member. Sometimes I am invited to go and answer questions pertaining to education or to brief assembly members on what is happening in the district so far as education is concerned.

One of the directors explained that under the new policy the district director represented the Ministry of Education on Boards of Governors for all secondary schools in a district. As a representative, it was the district director's responsibility to attend all Board of Governors meetings. It was observed, however, that because headmasters sent meeting invitations to the regional office, it was usually an officer from the regional office who attended such meetings. The director was not happy about this situation. The district director was asked to explain why the regional director adopted that procedure knowing that was not the way the new system should work. He gave the following account:

> The regional directorate is now a very big directorate, and the delegation of powers is also big. You will be surprised to know that sometimes the Regional Director doesn't see some of the letters that go there. A letter goes to the office registry and is minuted straight to a schedule officer, who might not have been briefed by either the Regional Director or may not know much about the system. Over there we have higher institution units and basic education units, just as we have here. So the letters go there and they just appoint somebody to attend Board meetings which is not an ideal thing. In this office all letters come to me and I distribute them. I can foresee the problem at the region office about letters coming from outside. If all letters should go to the Regional Director, it will not be very easy for him to deal with them. My only problem is that it seems most of the officers at the Regional Education Office don't have copies of the new policies, but are expected to act according to them, and that is ignorance.

According to one district director, an administrative problem seemed to prevail in the district offices located in regional capitals where regional directors were also based. The problem, from his experience, was peculiar to such district officers because if a district director operated in a remote district far removed from the regional office, he/she would not come all the way to the regional office just to consult another director there. The situation suggests that some officers at the regional offices were either not conversant with their responsibilities under the new policy or were unwilling to give up the previous ways for doing things in favour of the new procedures. The problem was more prominent where the proximity to the regional director facilitated such contacts. One director mentioned that directors had quarterly meetings at which they kept pointing out some of these anomalies. He noted:

> We hold national and regional CODDE: Conference of District Directors of Education. The regional CODDE is held quite regularly. . . the national CODDE is held once a year. When we discuss these problems with colleagues from other districts, we realize that this is a problem in all the districts which operate at the regional capitals like Koforidua, Sekondi, Kumasi, Ho, and so on.

A district director based in a regional capital said he worked hand in hand with the municipal assembly in exercising authority at the local level. He was happy about the on-going arrangements as noted from the following comments:

> The system is working beautifully. For example, the Municipal Secretary does not do anything about education without seeking my advice. When he is making a decision about education, he says: "Now I want to do this, please advise me." When he finds that my advice is a bit at variance to what he thinking, I will say, “If you do it this way this is what happens.” Of late the assemblies and the communities have been deeply involved in the management of education. In fact, yesterday I got a letter from the Director General commending the involvement of the district assemblies and the communities in the management and supervision of schools.

Four assistant directors in regional and district offices were asked to explain the operation of the policy. One assistant director in a district office noted that since the district office was a full directorate and the head was a director, they did not send decisions to the region (higher level directorate) for approval. Therefore, in matters of teacher promotion, for example, they promoted teachers. They also posted teachers to the various schools, collected textbooks from Accra (headquarters) and distributed them to the schools. The officer emphasized that they did not send decisions to the regional office for approval. When a regional officer was asked to explain to whom heads of secondary schools reported, he said that functionally heads of secondary schools were under district directors but that the regional director superseded all activities. He pointed out:

> The whole thing is that the policy is still not very clear. You see, the decentralization is going on rather slowly. So you find that some functions are being performed by both directors. Because this is the regional capital, secondary schools are still dealing directly with the regional office. The district director is supposed to oversee them. If you go to the district centres which are not regional capitals, schools are functioning well there under the district directors, but the regional director can move there to correct certain things that may go wrong.

Two other assistant directors at the district office felt that considering the way in which the system was working, they still looked up to the government directives to implement policies. One of them noted that the system was supposed to be decentralized but they still looked up to the government directives:

> Well, the system is said to be decentralized, but we still look up to the top -- headquarters regarding certain issues. We have a director and we expect that as a director he could take certain decisions, but still he can maneuver only in terms of postings in the case of teachers below the rank of senior superintendent. All others must still be approved by headquarters or the regional director.

One of the district assistant directors observed that their responsibility at the district office was that "policies come down and we are expected to implement them." Even in the implementation, they were required to meet with the local communities to formalize such policies. They discussed policies that were handed over to them with the community and adapted them where necessary. Where they encountered a problem they referred to the authorities for possible modifications to suit the local conditions. These comments illustrate some of the frustrations facing the directors in exercising authority that the new policy purports to provide them. Their feelings about the system seemed to be at variance with the directors at the headquarters.

The public relations officer in a district education office played a key role by keeping the public informed about national educational issues. The budget officer also had a responsibility with respect to financing and budgeting for education in the district. In describing the system, a district office public relations officer observed:

> You see, even though the authorities are saying that education has been decentralized to the district level, it is not working in the sense that we still have to carry out instructions from Accra, the headquarters. We cannot initiate any policy on our own. We are still implementing policies initiated by headquarters, and there are many things we have to consult headquarters about. We don't make use of our initiative in many matters.

It is significant to note that these comments were made by the PRO, an important officer in the district education office who may be regarded as the *lens* through which the public saw the operations of the new policy. A regional budget officer explained what was supposed to be the situation and what the situation actually was in practice. He explained that although PNDC [Provisional National Defence Council] Law 207 included education as one of the decentralized departments, and for that matter district directors of education had been appointed, yet in areas of finance, education was still largely centralized. District directors did not have much control on finances. The decentralization policy was supposed to introduce new financial administrative procedures through composite budgeting, but because composite budgeting had not taken off, there was still a fairly centralized structure in operation. The officer noted:

> Taken at the conceptual level, we can say that education is decentralized to the extent that first and second cycle schools have been moved from the authority of the regional directorates to the district directorate of education. But financial decisions are still kept with the region.

This explanation suggests that even if some decision-making areas in education had been decentralized, authority in one important decision-making area upon which school operation largely depended had not been provided to those directly dealing with educational matters. The budget officer described what was prevailing prior to the decentralized policy and what was happening within the policy implementation. He recalled that prior to the new policy, there was a district council and a treasury which dealt with the government consolidated fund by servicing departments in the district. These were all operating in a single office and there was no overlap. The district administrative officer took care of the council funds. The treasury officer was the sole signatory to the consolidated funds which were passing through his office. However, with the advent of decentralization, the government merged the two -- the treasury and the council -- and were brought under the district assembly's auspices. Therefore education, as all other 21 departments, no longer saw themselves as separate entities, but as part of the district assembly as stipulated by PNDC Law 207. The Comptroller and the Accountant General issued circulars to that effect. The district finance officer and the district administrative officer are now in charge of all funds passing through the assemblies and the treasury system. Hence district educational authorities seek clearance from the district assembly for the use of funds.

The point noted from the comments made by the directors at various levels is that the policy of devolution may have been adopted in theory. In practice, however, the policy implementation was viewed differently by officers at different levels of decision-making. National headquarters directors felt the system had been fully decentralized, and those at the lower levels should be able to handle effectively educational matters. In line with this expectation, some directors at the regional and district levels thought the system was completely decentralized and was working well. Other directors thought it was working partially or was working slowly since they still had to seek approval for some decisions. District directors' observations had to do with whether the district office was located in a regional capital, and was therefore close to the regional director, or was far removed from the regional capital. Other officers, particularly those in the lower ranks such as assistant directors, thought the system was not working because it was still bureaucratic since they could not initiate policies on their own.

School-Based Authority for Decision-Making

According to the descriptions made by directors at the headquarters, heads of primary, junior and senior secondary schools had been vested with the authority for educational decision-making as school-based administrators. Eight out of the nine school heads interviewed indicated that their decision-making power was limited under the decentralization policy. Decisions taken on the spur of the moment had to be referred to a higher authority for approval. One senior secondary school head indicated that as heads they were limited in a way by the policies of government. Within that limit they could operate without consulting any higher authority. They were given guidelines on a number of issues such as discipline, and the control of staff. According to the head:

> There are certain decisions which are subject to approval by the Board of Governors, particularly with regard to staffing and discipline. In certain cases we implement decisions subject to approval by the headquarters. But more often than not, once the Board of Governors approve of a decision, the headquarters approves of the decision. In rare cases they advise against the decision we make, especially with regard to student-related matters.

The headmaster said there were some situations in which he could take a decision without consulting the Board of Governors. This decision related to a situation where there was a general feeling that the interests of the students were at risk. Teachers participated in such decision-making through serving on committees that deal with academic, disciplinary, and housemaster (domestic) matters. Such committees took decisions after which they reported to the headmaster for approval or otherwise. The position taken by a number of junior secondary headmasters differed somewhat from that of the senior secondary school heads. Their comments indicated that they had less authority than had senior secondary school heads. The following comments illustrate the perspectives of three junior secondary headmasters:

> Normally decisions are not made in the school, except minor ones such as repairs in the school. As a head, I meet with my teachers to decide on such matters. Later on we invite the PTA to consider and approve such decisions. Once approved, they contribute towards implementation. Major decisions are, however, made by the

> municipal assemblies. They are responsible for putting up buildings, providing furniture as well as their maintenance. Whenever we are going to have a meeting, we write to the District Director, and since this is a mission school, we also inform the Regional Manager about the agenda (our objectives). They do come. If they don't come personally, they send representative from the office. So they have their inputs into our decisions.
>
> When you talk about decentralization, you are referring to decisions about say, fixing school fees. This is not done at the district level but at the headquarters in Accra and is passed on to us. We abide by those decisions, then we collect the fees. So all we do is to take directives from above.
>
> Really we don't see any difference. It's just like the old system because we don't see the community participating. There is nothing like a decentralized system. For most major decisions we have to refer to the District Director or the management of our unit. So even if we make decisions, we still require approval of the Director. Until approval is given we may be doing the wrong thing.

These observations point to the suggestion that for some junior secondary school heads, real decision-making power still lay outside the confines of the school. There was a feeling that some of the administrative structures had not been properly organized, and that sometimes there was preferential treatment for some schools on the part of those at the helm of affairs, as the following comments portray:

> We have said over and again that needs of the schools should be properly planned by the central government taking into consideration what we need. What we see is that those at the helm of affairs who actually do the distribution of resources are interested in certain schools and so more attention is paid to some schools than others. In some cases even when funds have been released for a project, somewhere along the line we find that the money has been diverted to another school. So CHASS [Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools] has decided that for those with scholarships, parents can pay the fees initially so that when the money is finally received, they are reimbursed.

One of the junior secondary school heads described the procedures for collecting fees, a major source of funds for running the schools, by noting that directives for collecting fees were sent down by the central government.

Another junior secondary school head traced the line of authority from the headquarters to the school, and felt that the bureaucratic system of administration was still being followed. The headmaster did not think school-based administrators had been vested with the requisite authority to deal with school matters as appropriate, for example, in matters related to teacher discipline. He made the following comments to buttress his point:

> We feel that under a decentralized educational policy . . . the headmaster should have full control over the teachers so that if he finds that, as a teacher you are not working in the right way, he releases you. Whatever you will write later about him will be of no effect. They tell us: whenever a teacher commits a first offence, call

> him to a table, discuss the matter with him. Second time, write a query. Yet when you write a query, the office here will say: Come. Sit down. Your teacher did this? And so and so forth. In the long run you will come back to the school with the same teacher, and there is a problem. So teachers must be made to understand that the headmaster of the school has power over them. If you are not doing the right thing, he has the power to write a confidential report about you.

One headteacher of a primary school, however, felt he had been vested with the authority by the Ghana Education Service to make school decisions. He commented as follows:

> The Ghana Education Service has made us understand that a headteacher is representing the Director-General. So more or less a headteacher is a director-general in his own school. He is a decision-maker, and has the right to do everything in his school. I am able to take decisions regarding furniture, fees and so on. I will give you an example: at the beginning of this academic year, I found that primary 1 pupils did not have enough furniture. So I called my staff and put before them that the first item at the beginning of the academic year was to make enough furniture for P1. They all agreed and so I went ahead to make the furniture for the children.

At the same time another headteacher of a primary school said:

> In fact we receive instructions from above -- the headquarters in Accra -- through the district office. When we receive instructions we meet to discuss how to implement those decisions. If there are amendments to make, we make them and carry out the amended decisions. We inform our immediate head, the district director, about the changes we have made.

In the interviews teachers, as decision-makers, were asked to describe the system as they experienced it, at least as far as their respective classrooms were concerned. All seven teachers interviewed expressed varied opinions about how the new policy was working for them in their respective schools. According to one senior teacher who was also an administrator in a secondary school, even though it was stated in the policy of the Ministry of Education that heads were vested with authority to make decisions, certain factors were working against this policy, for example, admission policy. He gave the following explanation to support his assertion:

> Normally we operate within the guidelines which are dictated by the Ministry of Education and implemented by the Ghana Education Service. Students are admitted either from the middle schools or the junior secondary schools. They have to write a qualifying examination in order to be admitted. A student must attain a certain standard in order to be admitted. At present I know of aggregate 36, but what the headmasters can do is to exercise discretion in view of the number of students or candidates who may qualify for admission. Usually vacancies are limited so we may be inclined to admit only the best. So we look at those who made distinctions and grade 1, i.e. aggregate 12 up to 20 and then see if we can add more, depending upon the availability of spaces. But very often this is influenced by some

> community or situational factors. We are operating within in a community where relationships may play a very important role, e.g. family connections. One cannot simply ignore the plea of community members or a high official who comes with his child. You've got to do something.

These comments suggest that school administrators did not have a free-hand on certain decision-making issues. First, they were limited by the Ministry's guidelines, and secondly by pressures exerted by some influential members of the community. One teacher who saw the PTA as the main decision-making body in the school narrated the decision-making process as follows:

> In this school we don't make any policies. Every decision or policy we want to make is taken during PTA meetings. After that it becomes binding on the PTA to deliver the decisions we make to the District Director. What we do is to inform the office that such and such a thing is going on. The PTA then collects and spends whatever amount of money it obtains. The Director, however, reserves the right to reject a PTA decision. It is not every parent who attends PTA meetings. So the executive has to inform parents of the decision the PTA has taken. Yet somebody may not be satisfied with the decision and so will walk to the office to complain about a levy as unofficial. So whenever we take a decision we have to inform the district office, and they may agree, especially if we are able to convince them about the use of the money and they see that we, in fact, use money profitably. So the headmaster and staff operate the school within the policy guidelines of the Ghana Education Service. It's hard to use discretion in some situations.

One teacher referred to a promise made by the government to provide roads to a community and some facilities to the local secondary school including a block of four classrooms, a library, and staff quarters, and praised the government for being true to its promise. There were, however, no prior consultations between the government's contractors and the school authorities. This is what happened, according to the teacher:

> We are sad to say that in all this the school itself was not consulted. If those of us who were in charge had been consulted, may be some of the constructions would have been done in a better way, but you see that every instruction comes direct from the headquarters. We see contractors coming and doing just what they are asked to do. This is bad because in terms of space the library will not fulfill our needs. This is a growing school and we could have advised them to increase the study area to accommodate more books and more students. As I am talking some books are being kept at the headmaster's office. In the staff quarters too, we have only two bedrooms. We don't know for whom they were built -- whether for national service personnel, for the regular staff, or for the headmaster. So the staff quarters are completed but are still standing empty with no one living in it.

The point made by school-based administrators -- heads of primary, junior and senior secondary schools -- was that their decision-making authority was limited. Heads of senior secondary schools had Board of Governors as the real decision-making authority on the school site. Committees were also formed to deal with various school issues, make decisions, and advise the heads accordingly. Heads of primary and junior secondary schools had the PTA as the decision-making body on the school site. It is important to note, however, that all these decisions were subject to approval of a higher authority such as the director or the district assembly that was located outside the school.

Community-Based Authority for Decision-Making

The devolution policy (established by the PNDC Law 207 of 1988) expected the local communities, led by their district and municipal assemblies, to take whatever steps necessary to mobilize educational resources to supplement the central government's efforts. Law 207 was purported to give legal backing (authority) to such efforts. Respondents were asked to describe how such authority was being utilized.

Concerning the authority that was purported to have been transferred to the district and municipal assemblies, three directors, two budget officers, three headmasters, two teachers and a community leader pointed out that district assemblies had some responsibilities towards the schools in the form of providing an educational infrastructure. Therefore when educational directors were in need of money for some school project they were expected to consult the assemblies, especially if the expenditure was related to school structures. Hence the district director of education was expected to work within the financial and organizational framework established by the district assemblies. The general notion, however, was that the assemblies were unable to discharge these functions as expected. Where such authority was exercised, such as imposing levies, it was sometimes not consistent with official expectations. With regard to the exercising of a district assembly's authority, one headquarters director made the following comments:

> As a result of the new structures, some of the assemblies have taken the liberty to impose some levies -- they call it "Education Fund" -- and the Minister for Education is not happy about it. The assemblies have to generate funds according to their laws to run the districts, apart from what the government gives them. They are aware that they have responsibility towards education but don't have the funds. So we find it difficult to stop whatever action they take in that respect. Yet we are not happy because many of our donors have observed that a lot of children drop out of school because parents cannot pay the fees charged. The assemblies charge fees, and it's all in the interest of education, but we are against it simply because some parents are not able to pay which means that some children won't go to school. That also means that our aim of universal primary education will not be achieved.

One district director was asked whether under the devolution policy, the assemblies' decisions took precedence over those of the Ministry of Education. The director replied, "I can't say that they take precedence. It seems like everybody is working in his own interest." The director attributed this unclear situation to the fact that the

Ministry of Finance, the custodian of the bulk of educational funds, had not been decentralized and noted:

> I think the whole problem is because the Ministry of Finance hasn't been decentralized. This makes it very difficult for the district assemblies and other agencies to work effectively because we need money to work. If the Ministry had been decentralized, perhaps these problems would not arise.

A district budget officer noted that the education sector had decentralized the award of its contracts like the building of schools, workshops, and bungalows. Consequently, the Ministry of Education, to a large extent, involved the assembly in its programs. The budget officer noted:

> There are so many community programs on which the assembly has representatives. In the selection of headteachers for primary schools, for instance, the assembly is represented on the interview panels. Also with the introduction of senior secondary schools, the district assembly is supposed to bear one-third of the cost of buildings such as libraries and classrooms.

Another director said that the communities were not only responsible for ensuring that there was acceptable educational infrastructure for their use, but were also expected to participate in school supervision. The following rationale was given for involving the communities in school supervision:

> Now we are involving the communities in school supervision because, for example, if a circuit supervisor has to supervise between 20 and 30 schools, he cannot be in all schools everyday. So school-based supervision should be done by the headteacher. If, however, the headteacher is not effective and the teachers relax, the people who can know immediately are the parents and community members living there. Therefore, it is their responsibility now to ensure that their children are not made to work on the farm the whole day; that teachers are attending classes, and that children are not sent home because of this and that. This is the only way through which we can ensure effective teaching and learning in the schools, because officers from the circuit, from district, from region, from headquarters, take long time to reach the schools.

A district director explained:

> I have suggested the formation of education committees in the towns and villages. I have tried to impress upon the people that education benefits everybody in the community. Therefore contribution to education should not be a burden of only the PTAs. The towns should have education committees to take charge of the supervision of education. I have told them, and all of them, including headteachers and teachers, know that if the teachers are not doing their work well, it is the community's responsibility to let me know.

A community leader said "the decentralization initiated by the government is a very good program. It is up to the district assemblies to be more effective on their laws and enforce them." The community leader thought the policy was not working in the communities because of some dissensions that developed often among some community leaders. He gave the following example:

> Some time ago a law was made in the [Name of District] on the payment of basic rate. Just before the law was to be signed for promulgation, one chief stood up to oppose it and his reason was: I am participating in making this law, what if a nephew of mine is caught in it in the future -- what shall I do then? So the district assemblies should make the laws and effect them with seriousness. I suggest that district assemblies should be reshuffled, particularly to remove those now occupying very sensitive positions. If these people are replaced, the law can work. Part of the problem is also due to chieftaincy disputes. Any community that is beset with chieftaincy disputes faces a lot of confusion in its affairs. If we have a strong chief, as soon as he puts his feet down, things forge ahead. This is happening in some districts.

A primary school headteacher declared that "the new policy makes it a requirement on all citizens in the community to be involved in school affairs. Because of that they are invited and their ideas are sought on how the school should be run." At the same time the headteacher noted that, "very often it is only those who have children in school who help. We don't include those who don't have children in the school." This observation was corroborated by another junior secondary school head who said, "citizens usually contribute only to the school which their children attend. It is not feasible to call on non-parents to contribute to a school in any way." Two parents were of the view that:

> There are some people who feel that they don't have any child in school, and so they will not make any contribution towards any school project. So the responsibility lies on us parents who have children in the school. If you ask any one who has no child in the school to make any educational contribution, he will tell you that he has no child in the school and so he will not pay.
>
> If a citizen's child attends a particular school, he will try to pay anything that he is asked to pay. But if he has no child in the school and is asked to pay something to that school, how does he pay? This can only be done by somebody who is really generous. In the mission schools they appeal for funds sometimes in which case everyone present may be willing to donate to help even if the person has no child in the school.

One parent and a community leader, however, expressed contrary views with the following comments:

> We all realize that those who struggled to put up our present Catholic school, for example, did not carry it away. It is now a property for [Name of town]'s people. And so if there is maintenance to be done, it should not be a burden on only the parents. No, no, no, because the school is there for the whole town. That is a matter very easy to understand. If the Roman Catholic school organizes an event, it can benefit the whole of the town.

> As long as a person is a citizen of the community, he must discharge his civic responsibilities irrespective of whether he has a child in the school or not. We should all share equally in civic duties. Somebody may not have a child in school, or may not have children at all, but may have better ideas than somebody who has a child in the school.

While these comments express different points of view, they suggest that at the community level, no organizational structures had been put in place to involve effectively all citizens in contributing towards education as was supposed to be done under the authority of the district administration. The district assemblies were not able to enforce their own laws. This observation is supported by the following scenario described by a community leader:

> When the government releases some grant for a project, the community should help by providing communal labour. These things are no longer operating well. The government's grant doesn't come often. When it comes we don't see how it is used; the community does not have any input into whatever project is planned. All we sometimes hear is that the government has directed that this and that should be done, so school children should bring stones. For example, in the case of [Name of senior secondary school], the government granted ¢10 million to put up the school buildings. The community was then asked to assist in that project. But the chiefs protested: "If the government has brought money to put up school buildings, why should we be asked to contribute?" It generated a heated argument and it took a long time to convince the people of the need to help the government in putting up the buildings.

In order to mobilize all members of the community and to impress on them the authority supposed to be exercised by them under the new policy, a public relations officer pointed to the need to form school management committees. The traditional rulers, the *asafo* companies [native military groups], and other recognized pressure groups within the society could be represented on these committees. The officer noted:

> Management committees can meet from time to time, just as is done in higher institutions by board of governors. This management committees should be formed from the local community with opinion leaders who will meet school administrators to formulate policies for the schools, and to be responsible for the local environment.

An assistant director representing a regional director observed that a community was supposed to be made up of the district chief executive, the district assemblies, the Ghana Education Service (the district education office), the town development committees, the chiefs, the PTA, and the religious bodies -- all these together were supposed to make up the school community. The director pointed out that the community had important role to play, and observed:

> If anything is going wrong it is the community's responsibility to correct it. They should be responsible for the school building, provision of toilet facilities, tables and chairs, and all those things, and see that everything goes on well.

On the autonomy of the district authorities, particularly district assemblies, chiefs and circuit officers in the education offices, two district assistant directors made the following comments:

> The district assemblies are autonomous to some extent, but they also continue to look up for help. Instead of the bulk of the money being sent to the assembly to disburse, it is lodged somewhere, and the assemblies have to submit their requests which could sometimes be rejected. The only area the assemblies have some power is the small small money they collect from the market, and that is too meager.
>
> Chiefs may not be all that effective in making decisions, but opinion leaders can assist them. We also have circuit supervisors in every circuit. It is their responsibility to mobilize not only the opinion leaders, but also those who can help the community. Opinion leaders may not hold executive positions in the community, but they can help to rally the people round to help in the running of the schools.

These comments suggest that even if the assemblies had authority, such authority was not being exercised in the interest of their communities. They also point to the notion that although the assembly was the highest decision-making body in the district, its accessibility to development funds within its legal authority, as provided by Law 207, was curtailed by the existing financial administrative structures. At the same time the assembly had authority over the district educational director's authority to generate additional funds. As regards a district director's authority to generate funds, one district director commented:

> The director can impose levy but only with the approval of the assembly, because the director implements decisions. The assembly is the legislative body that can make laws. I remember one instance very well when the assembly decided to impose a levy of ¢1000 per parent. It is with the authority of the assembly that the director is now collecting this money.

According to this respondent, the district director within his authority could only implement decisions. One district director disclosed that town councils were going to be formed to take care of development in the immediate localities. From that point, according to the constitution, assembly members and their chiefs would take care of local problems. However, according to this director, "they [the town councils] won't have the power to make all laws, which means that on some matters they would have to refer to the district assembly which has the power to make laws."

Another director explained that the communities' role was the provision of infrastructure and other physical facilities, but in the area of school management and supervision of instruction, its role was very limited. The director described some attempts being made to involve the communities such as providing input in the appointment of school heads and the performance of teachers and, their removal from the school by the community where necessary. The following comments illustrate some of those attempts:

> There is a general feeling that education is a function of both the school and the community. So there is a need to involve the communities more and more in the management of the schools. And the first step in this direction is that the communities are going to be given a chance to participate in the selection of who should head their schools. There is a pilot scheme under which about 2000 primary schools are involved. On the selection panel is the chief or his representative to make sure that a teacher is working well. If a teacher is not performing well in the school, the panel will influence the decision whether the teacher should continue to work in the school or not.

One district director spoke of the community's *awareness* in the discharge of its responsibilities rather than *authority* for making and implementing decisions. These remarks indicate that the communities may help when called upon to do so rather than being considered as authoritative decision-making bodies. The director remarked:

> What I can say is that this reform has brought some awareness to the people. Formerly they thought it is the government that should do everything for them. We haven't reached the top yet, but there is some sort of awareness in the community. When they are called upon, they are prepared to help.

The point to note from the responses is that community authority was exercised through the district and municipal assemblies. Being legally established bodies, the assemblies had the legal authority to make and enforce laws. However, some of their laws such as imposing school levies, would normally not be approved in governmental circles. Moreover, they did not seem effective in discharging their responsibilities such as helping to put up school buildings. Therefore, it had made very little impact on the communities. Some community awareness had been achieved, but it was not totally effective in mobilizing resources for education.

Parents' Authority for Decision-Making

Parents' authority in decision-making was exercised through the association jointly formed by parents and teachers. All the headmasters and headteachers interviewed mentioned the role being played by parents. A number of directors and assistant directors also acknowledged the role being played by parents. While a good number of the heads did not think the larger communities were assuming the responsibilities supposed to be assigned to them under the decentralization law, many of them were of the view that parents were playing an active role. This authority, as noted from the responses, was being exercised through the PTAs.

One district director said that official policies in education were meant to be implemented by teachers in the classroom, but some of these policies were such that teachers could not implement them without the co-operation of parents. Therefore, according to the director, sometimes they had to "meet with parents at PTA meetings and discuss educational policies. Where there are problems it is our responsibility to bring them to the higher authorities for their consideration."

In the interviews, parents were asked to describe the operation of the PTAs of the schools in which they had enrolled their children. Three parents who had two or three children at various levels of school made the following comments:

> The association meets occasionally to deliberate on issues and problems that the school authorities usually bring forth. One of the problems, in the case of [Name of school] is scarcity of water. Also the government is unable to provide certain items needed by the students. These items tend to be very expensive so it is up to the parents to meet to discuss them and make contributions. Sometimes the contributions are voluntary. Sometimes they are mandatory because the association meets and decides on a fee for us to pay. At other times people make voluntary contributions.
>
> The association meets and decides on all matters. "In fact, I don't attend meetings quite often because of the nature of my work. Most of the times I am engaged in the office, so I am unable to attend."
>
> I have no participation in the PTA. Now I am a little free. But soon I will be travelling to Accra where I have been plying up and down. My elder sister who used to keep the house has passed away. Now I have only one sister left. Only the two of us do everything in the house. At the moment we have a funeral to attend, and we need funds, otherwise I would have left here yesterday.

Another parent with four children in schools located in two different communities (a small community and an urban centre) said she did not attend PTA meetings of the smaller community school because she did not usually hear of such meetings. She noted, however, that she attended the PTA meetings of the urban community school because they usually sent her invitation notices. She said:

> Recently there was a children's day in one of the schools [urban community school] and when I was informed, I attended. I also pay my contributions every time I am informed.

According to this parent, although she was resident in the smaller community, she did not hear of the school's PTA meetings and so did not attend. The school in the larger communities, located outside her place of residence, usually sent her invitation notices to attend PTA meetings which she accepted and attended quite often. Another parent said:

> Because of my work, I am not able to attend PTA meetings. I have been able to attend only one meeting, and that was a very long time ago.
>
> My children have just enrolled in the school so I don't know for sure whether they have PTA or not.

Parents were asked to explain what they did, if they did not agree with a PTA decision taken without them. Four of them replied as follows:

> Sometimes I am not happy over certain issues that are discussed, but because I have no reason to be absent, I have to accept them. Sometimes I accept whatever is discussed because I feel it is in the interest of the students.
>
> I always support a PTA decision, because if it was a bad decision, the PTA would not make it. So I will always support their decision.
>
> If all members at the meeting have agreed on a decision, I won't say: "I don't agree with it. I will accept it."
>
> Whatever contributions we are asked to make we do so, and we can't say anything against that. That is because I am not normally at the meetings. So when they bring a request home and every student is paying but my daughter does not pay, it is something like a disgrace to her. So even if I cannot really afford, I just have to try.

A parent with three children in two different schools felt the PTA needed to be more effective. According to the parent, "at the moment the PTA is not effective because it has become a matter between the district office and the teachers. So they are able to squeeze us, the parents at any time." This parent also felt that:

> The PTA has not been genuine and has not kept faith with the people, and so I don't attend its meetings. If you attend its meeting you will find that the topic being discussed on floor is not legal. For that reason if you express an opinion that is not consistent with theirs, they brush it aside. Only if you side with them will they accept your opinion and deal with it; because of that I am not happy to attend its meetings. Moreover, the nature of my work often takes me away from town. I travel quite often and so I am unable to attend PTA meetings.

These observations seem to suggest that generally many parents were preoccupied with other engagements which prevented them from exercising any authority that might have been vested in them. One community leader noted that:

> Parents carry blame in the sense that they don't take interest in what their children are actually studying. In the morning he puts the child's money for food for that day on the table. Once that is done, the parent feels his job for the child's education that day is finished. He has assured himself that the child is gone to school to

> study. A parent may also say to her child: "Abena, don't go to school today. Go and keep the store." All these have side-effects on the child's total education.

The community leader was asked to suggest what could be done about parents' not taking interest in what their children were actually studying, and the reply was:

> Well, as for meetings you don't expect everybody to attend; this is something assured. Also, there are many parents who are satisfied to hear their school children say: "Papa, my school says we should bring this amount of money" and straight away the parent will pay that money. For this reason this parent does not see any need to attend PTA meetings. He thinks, "After all, I have paid the contribution being demanded, what is the point in attending a meeting again? I am going to do my business." It's a primitive idea, anyway.

A senior university administrator stated that when the PTAs were first formed, the objective was to bring them close to the school to enable them to know what the schools were doing, and to let them know the role they had to play in the education of their children. That was the idea. Now the role has expanded to include assistance in financing. While the headmasters referred to decisions made by the PTA to generate resources -- which seemed to reflect a decision-making authority -- one assistant director at a district office noted that the PTAs were there to help the government. And although in most schools, especially the old ones, the PTAs were seriously involved, they had to ask permission from the government before any fees were determined.

According to all respondents, the PTA was recognized as an important body that provided good inputs into school-decision-making. However, the responses indicate that many parents did not physically participate in such decisions. Therefore, decisions appeared to be taken by a few members on behalf of other parents. Responses also indicated that most parents, for varied reasons, would accept decisions taken without them.

Summary

The Ministry of education, according to respondents, had been decentralized. This implied that most educational decisions that were centrally taken prior to the policy implementation, particularly those that dealt with educational resources -- money, infrastructure and personnel -- were taken at the lower levels. These levels were the region, the district, the local community, and the school. National headquarters directors felt that education had been decentralized and most decisions could be taken at the lower levels, except issues like teacher dismissal and the assigning of newly trained teachers to the regions.

Both the region and the district were headed by directors. Regional and district directors, however, differed in their opinions on the operation of the policy. Most directors noted that the system was not completely decentralized. Many educational responsibilities were supposed to have been transferred from the region to the district. Directors located in the regional capitals were particularly dissatisfied with the practical division of responsibilities between the region and the district. Some functions supposed to have been transferred to the districts were still being performed by the regions.

Heads of primary, junior, and senior secondary schools noted that they had limited authority in decision-making. Heads of senior secondary schools seemed happy with the authority they exercised with the backing of their boards of governors. Heads of primary and junior secondary schools had the PTAs to help them make decisions, subject to the approval of the district assemblies and the district director of education.

The communities were expected to exercise their authority led by their elected representatives, the district assemblies. The assemblies had legal authority to make laws for community development. However, they did not seem to be able to exercise this authority effectively. It was therefore not making the expected impact on the provision of resources. It also appeared that some of their laws, particularly with regard to educational provisions, were at variance with those of the central government's expectations.

At the community level, parents seemed committed to educational provisions. This authority was supposed to be exercised through the PTAs. Many parents did not, however, actively participate in PTA matters although many of them agreed to abide by PTA decisions.

The Impact of Decision-Making Authority on the Provision of Educational Infrastructure

Respondents were asked to describe how the decentralized decision-making authority was affecting the provision of educational resources. In this section, responses about the provision of educational resources as a function of authority in educational decision-making are presented. Responses generally reflect the views of directors, headmasters, and teachers. One district director recounted that:

> With regard to budgeting, although the money for our district should normally come here straight from Accra, as at now our allocation goes to the regional director. He breaks them up and send us the Financial Encumbrances (F.E.s) which we are entitled to in this district. Another issue relates to educational infrastructure, and that concerns the sharing of the educational load among certain sections of the community. At the tertiary level all the infrastructure is provided by the government. The same applies to the senior secondary schools. At the basic education level the district assembly is responsible for the provision of

> infrastructure. But some of the districts such as ours are very poor. Hence, the government has decided to take up some of the load. As a result, pavilion classrooms are being put up for some selected schools. At the same time staff bungalows are being constructed for those selected schools.

One headquarters director noted that there was a logistic problem with the provision of educational facilities. He explained:

> The problem has been the provision of adequate school buildings and furniture. As far as basic education (first cycle schools) is concerned, it is the responsibility of the district assemblies to provide these facilities. Textbooks are provided nationally by the central government. Unfortunately many of the district assemblies are not financially viable or strong enough to provide these facilities -- classrooms and furniture. So you see many of our schools with poor facilities. However, the government has been trying to supplement the efforts of these districts, especially those which are in difficult areas -- those who are unable to provide these facilities, especially since the educational reforms started. We've been able to provide some furniture to some of these schools. The government has also been able to obtain donor assistance from the World Bank and USAID [United States Agency for International Development]. Now we have two major projects: the Primary Education Program (PREP) which is being sponsored by USAID, and Primary School Development Project being assisted by the World Bank. Even though many of the communities are poor, they are trying to provide facilities like furniture, etc. for education, especially since the reforms started.

On the provision of school facilities, one secondary school administrator said:

> Our school's location has a large catchment area, and the people who qualify for admission come from a very wide area. For example, from Bibiani to Sefwi Wiawso, a very large region -- we have only two senior secondary schools at Bibiani and Wiawso. It is only recently that we have added another one at Sefwi Bekwai. Therefore, there is so much pressure that at times we are forced to admit more students than our facilities can cope with. We are aware that for a normal senior secondary school to operate functionally, a classroom should accommodate about 35 students and a maximum of about 40. In certain cases you can add about 10 to make a total enrollment of 45. In our case a class may be 60 or even 70 students. This number adversely affects the quality of teaching and learning. At times passing through rows in the classroom becomes impossible due to congestion. All you do as a teacher is to lecture; but to give individual attention is nil.

The officer said that in terms of its geographical area, the district was large, but had only two senior secondary schools. He was asked to explain why there were only two secondary schools. He attributed the situation to negligence on the part of the central government. He explained further:

> As far as I am concerned, a government should not pick and choose where development should be carried. There are now 10 regions in the country. If there is any planning to be done, every region's needs must be taken into consideration. We know that education started along the coast during the colonial times. Therefore

> educational facilities are more concentrated along the coastal lines; but now we see the need to spread education all over the country, and as much as possible, uniformly. To achieve this, there should be more concentrated efforts and more determination in areas which seem to have been neglected.

Another factor that accounted for lack of schools, as noted by the officer, was the awareness of the people in that area. He explained that education was introduced in the community when mining was active there. After middle school graduation, mining employment was readily available in the 1960s. Hence, people considered basic education as adequate, since people could get jobs and rise through the ranks to become accountants and engineers without any higher level of professional training. Secondary education was therefore not seen as a social requirement.

Apart from the above two factors, another problem mentioned was "poverty in the midst of plenty." The officer felt that although the district had a lot of human and natural resources including minerals, timber, lumbering and corporations, yet there was poverty in the area. And because of poverty, the people were unable to finance the education of their wards. In order to correct this type of imbalance the officer stressed the need to call upon the central government to uplift education in that area by providing some more institutions. He noted that the provision of buildings and other facilities required very heavy capital outlay which the community alone could not afford. He agreed, however, that the people should be mobilized to contribute communal labour and pay taxes to help in putting up school buildings.

Another school administrator observed:

> Under the decentralization policy, communities are expected to contribute towards the opening of senior secondary schools. While the government is called upon to provide materials, they could also provide communal labour. If the people are taxed, they might not be able to pay, but they can at least provide communal labour and some minor contributions.

On the problem with funding, one district assistant director explained:

> Funds continue to be held at the top. This is creating problems. Officers travel on official assignments sometimes at their own expense because the money is not readily available. When they return they submit their travel claims. These claims are forwarded, but the office will be told that there is no money. At the same time the district education officers are required to be monitoring -- to be supervising the schools. Now how can somebody be travelling round the whole district when he does not get a refund of the money he spends from his pocket? So on paper there is decentralization, but in actual fact the people at the top are still holding up the exercise of decentralization.

These comments suggest that in the provision of educational infrastructure, much of the authority to provide resources, how and when to provide them, still lay with the central government rather than the community- and school-based authorities. In the case of one senior secondary school, the headmaster noted that the community was not involved in the provision of resources. "As far as this school is concerned, I will say that such involvement is nil," he said. "The decentralization policy has been put in place, but we have some bottlenecks", said another headmaster of a junior secondary school. He explained that the whole operation of the school hinged on finance. Yet the government had ordered that there should be no unauthorized collection of fees. Therefore he reasoned:

> Since everything hinges on finance and we find it very difficult to collect fees from the children, it is difficult to run the school. Also, it is not all parents who are in a position to contribute. Even payment of school fees is a problem. At present we have a lot of children owing school fees, and because of that, an embargo has been placed on their teachers' salaries. So when we need money to back up our activities in the school we have a problem.

In order to cope with financial constraints one headmaster referred to other sources of funds. He noted that apart from textbook and sports fees, they had been authorized to collect one hundred cedis (¢100) from each pupil per year. This money was utilized for some basic needs like handwash basins and towels. He explained that such contributions had been embedded in the school fees but were not sufficient for a whole year. Two headmasters indicated that driving away students from schools was one sure way of collecting fees, which was, however, a difficult thing to do. They had been instructed from headquarters to desist from driving out students for not paying their fees. One headmaster put it this way:

> The payment of fees is not regular. We have some recalcitrant parents who don't pay willingly. And mind you, the government has instructed the schools not to send away children who default in school fees payment. And if you can't send away children when money is required, it means there is a problem somewhere.

One headmaster explained the processes of disbursing funds that came to the school. He explained that they had disbursement formalities under which each fund went into the spending area for which it had been allocated. He added, "We are restricted from going beyond the estimates for any item of expenditure." One primary school headteacher explained:

> For decisions concerning furniture and repair work, we have PTA. The staff and the PTA meet to decide on what type of help the school needs. We put the question to the parents and they decide: "Alright, we've seen that the furniture in the school is inadequate for our children, so we will contribute ¢100, ¢200 or ¢500

> to provide sufficient furniture." As regard other repair work, we throw that also to the parents and they decide on how to make them. When the PTA takes a decision and the collection of money is made, we go ahead with whatever we have planned to do. We don't refer to any higher authority.

Similarly, another headteacher said in her school they could take decisions on resources, but before such decisions could be agreed upon, they had to consult the parents, but because [Name of Town] was an urban town, not all the citizens in the town enrolled their children in that school. According to the headteacher, the school's community referred to people living in and around where the school was situated. She explained that while in the rural areas, one community had one school and that school belonged to the whole town or the whole village, it was not so in urban centres. On the PTA's role in decision making, the headteacher noted:

> When the PTA meet and make their resolutions, we send a copy to the District Director to study. If he agrees, we give the green light to the parents. The Director very often agrees with such resolutions. It is only on the question of fees that problems can occur sometimes. When we decide on fees, the Director relies on government's directives to advise us. If parents are going beyond official policy the Director will guide them. But where he feels that the decisions are in line with the government policies he gives his consent.

A teacher noted that:

> The central government has a part to play. The district assembly within the community also has a part to play. Sometimes they levy the people but this may not be sufficient. The policy is that we cannot levy the children. We have to pass that through the District Director. If the PTA is effective, we can get the resources we need. The PTA is doing well, but attendance at meetings is not encouraging sometimes.

A headquarters director explained that while the government helps with the most difficult situations, such as communities that cannot do anything at all, those who can provide resources are encouraged. This encouragement can be taken up by the PTAs. However, according to the director:

> One thing is that the PTAs take undue advantage to impose certain levies on parents. For instance, [Name of secondary school] is asking every parent to pay ¢10,000 per month to build a classroom. And the order is: If you don't pay your children shouldn't come to school. Meanwhile the official policy is that no child should be sent out of school for not paying fees. By the time the central government is informed, a lot of children will be out of school and some may not come again. These are some of the things PTAs should seriously consider.

A parent observed that under the new system, the government was doing quite well. But according to him:

> The only snag is that the program is not producing good results. Good plans have been made, but the people to direct its effective implementation are lacking. If we get the experts to monitor the program it will yield good results. The policy makers sitting in offices at the headquarters should listen to teachers in the classroom. Teachers are in the classroom and they know the problems. If the top officials reject teachers' advice the whole system may collapse. One headmaster said that even when they are invited to a meeting, no serious discussions are made. They are only told what to go and do in the classroom. Instead of inviting us to discuss issues, they simply ask us to go and implement decisions they have made. What should we do when we find that decisions taken without our inputs are not workable?" So the right thing to do is to invite teachers' opinions about what should be done in the classrooms.

With regard to resources like school building, furniture, and textbooks, a district public relations officer noted that district authorities still consulted headquarters which provided the funds for education. He pointed out, "until such time that we are able to generate funds from the local level, and we are able to fund community projects, local authorities will have to refer to headquarters. A regional budget officer was of the opinion that most of the problems being faced by the government, the district assemblies, the communities and the schools were a question of fiscal decentralization. He explained:

> We still want a way out of moving from a centralized financial administration to decentralized type, not only in education, but across the board. And this is the major problem the country is facing. Consultants are looking at it and I believe we can still do it practically. We used a two-year program to implement the decentralization program by first preparing composite budget. When we are implementing the composite budget we look at the decrees and regulations on finance and disbursement in the country. We are still operating a highly centralized system based on the financial administration decree of 1979, and the financial administration regulations LI 1234. There is a need for us to look at these two basic documents and decentralize financing. As it is there are no guidelines as to how to treat decentralized financing in this country.

The point made by the respondents was that central government funds were sent to the regional directors who reallocated them to the district directors. Such funds seemed, however, to be held at the top and were not released at the appropriate time. There was therefore no fiscal decentralization, and the government still had the ultimate power to decide what to be done.

Summary

The central government funds were first allocated to the regional directors. The regional director would break such funds for re-allocation to the districts. Such funds were, however, not released to the districts in good time. The government was responsible for textbooks and equipment while the communities, led by the district assemblies, were responsible for other resources including school buildings and furniture. The government, however, obtained assistance from foreign agencies which provided further assistance to the communities, especially the poor or difficult areas. There was unequal distribution of educational facilities among the districts.

The district offices and schools were facing financial problems with regard to school supervision. They could take decisions on money for sports and other equipment. There was a problem with the collection of fees since the government retained the authority to decide on what was to be done in the schools. For most financial issues, the districts and their schools relied on government directives. Hence there was no financial decentralization.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has dealt with operation of the devolution policy, one of the central themes of the study. This theme centred on the first four research questions which dealt with (1) the perceptions of policy makers, administrators and stakeholders of the policy under which money and other resources were allocated to schools under the devolution policy; (2) the making of decisions affecting the provision of educational resources by the central government and the local communities, (3) the major areas of expenditure in the provision of pre-university education, and (4) the division of responsibilities between the central government and the local communities.

In their responses, directors, headmasters, and some teachers among the respondents interviewed noted that the Director-General, the over-all head of the Ghana Education Service, was being assisted in the regions and the districts by directors. All officers interviewed, irrespective of their position in the administrative hierarchy, agreed that regional and district educational offices were all full directorates under the new policy, and were headed by directors -- they were of the same rank. The regional director was, however, described as a divisional director, more experienced, and a coordinator of educational matters affecting all districts in the region. The regional director also facilitated the work of the district directors. Directors working with the Director-General at the headquarters were also divisional directors, and were of the same rank as the regional (divisional) directors.

A number of respondents, particularly those who dealt directly with school issues (district directors, heads and teachers indicated that some directives came down from the headquarters (Accra) through regional directors to the district directors to be effected.

Assistant directors representing the regional director at the regional offices noted that there was less work in the regions and more in the districts, since more responsibilities had been transferred from the regions to the districts. The regional directorate, with a number of assistant directors serving under the regional director, performed responsibilities including: (1) receiving funds from the government and re-allocating them to the districts, (2) assigning teachers to the district directors to be posted to the schools, (3) promoting teachers within certain rank, (4) collecting information of national concern from the district directors for onward submission to the Director-General at the headquarters, and (5) dealing with some selected matters related to secondary education.

District directors pointed out that four assistant directors were serving under each district director. The district director performed such functions as: (1) posting teachers to the schools, (2) promoting teachers within certain rank, (3) disciplining teachers -- suspension and dismissal, however, had to be referred to the regional director for further action. This action could be referred to the headquarters, for a final decision to be taken, (4) advising the district chief executive who was the political head of the district on educational matters, (5) dealing with all basic education matters, (6) representing the Ministry of Education on Board of Governors of secondary schools, (7) attending district assembly meetings to brief members on educational matters or to answer questions pertaining to education, and (8) dealing with some secondary education matters such as inspection.

The regional director was, however, still performing some functions that fell in the jurisdiction of district directors. For example, heads of some senior secondary schools were still reporting to the regional director rather than to the district director. Some district directors, particularly those based in the regional capitals, noted that some secondary schools heads were by-passing them to deal directly with the regional director.

In matters of finance, the system was still more centralized than should have been the case. Therefore, as some of the officers noted, even when a district director wanted to levy some fees, the decision had to be referred to the headquarters through the regional director. According to some officers, some decisions were dealt with in a "top-down" approach. They were handed down from the headquarters to be implemented. Such decisions were discussed with the community members before any possible implementation could be effected.

All heads of primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools indicated that, as school-based authorities, their power to make decisions was limited. Responses, however, showed that there were variations in such limitations. Heads of primary and senior secondary schools were more positive in their use of power than did heads of junior secondary schools. In the case senior secondary schools, some decisions were taken at board of governors' meetings while in the primary and junior secondary schools where no such board of governors existed, decisions were taken in collaboration with parents, usually at PTA meetings. Some decisions were also taken at committee level. District directors had input into such decisions. Where a district director did not have any such input, PTA decisions were later referred to him or her for approval or otherwise. The regional or district director was guided by national policy guidelines in approving decisions. Thus bureaucratic approach to making decisions was practised. Teachers' responses were largely consistent with those of heads, particularly with use of the PTA and the committee system. Teachers, pointed out, however, that some decisions, regarding school fees, for example, were taken with reference to the national headquarters.

As regards community-based authority in decision-making, responses indicated that there was some collaboration between district directors of education and the district assemblies over the provision of educational resources. According to Law 207, district assemblies were the highest decision-making bodies in the districts. Directors had to consult them over educational issues, particularly questions related to fees. The assemblies had power to impose levies on the schools, although according to one director at the national headquarters, the Ministry of Education was not happy about such levy imposition. The assemblies did not, however, seem to have complete control over affairs in the district as laid down by law. Hence they themselves continued to look up to the central government for assistance, especially with regard to finances. They could, however, make some local laws regarding issues such as property rates, licenses, and market fees. The Ministry of Finance, the focal point of financial policy, had still not been decentralized. Consequently, the assemblies' accessibility to funds was limited. This made their work more difficult. The assemblies had also been empowered to award some local projects as contracts to local contractors.

Among community members, only those with children in the schools participated to some extent in school affairs. Such participation had not, however, been institutionalized. Parents, according to headmasters, were involved in decision-making. Headmasters could not normally implement policies handed down to them by the Ministry of Education without first consulting parents. But from the parents' own responses, such involvement did not seem to imply any use of authority. Moreover, most of the parents interviewed did not even participate in decisions that were normally taken at PTA meetings. They were, however, willing to accept decisions that were taken at PTA meetings without their inputs. Respondents described different processes by which educational resources were dealt with in their communities -- a situation expected under decentralization -- where every region or district was dealing with its own set of priorities. Directors and headmasters were those respondents who gave some description regarding resource provisions as a function of the decentralization policy. Most of these descriptions pointed to problems with infrastructure, particularly with regard to their adequacy.

Responses seem to suggest that responsibilities were shared between the central government and the communities. Textbooks, stationery and equipment, for example, were to be provided evenly to the schools by the central government. Buildings and furniture were to be provided largely by the communities, led by their district assemblies. Efforts being made included: the government funds for the district were allocated through the regional director, government has tried to supplement the provisions being made by the communities, especially in the difficult areas; some projects were being sponsored by foreign agencies such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development; Problems were encountered on the part of both the government and the communities. Among the problems mentioned were: the government was perceived as neglecting some areas; community awareness was below expectation in some areas; provision of inadequate buildings and furniture; district assemblies were not viable enough to provide these facilities; and the government had instructed local authorities not to collect unapproved fees.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VARIOUS PARTNERS

The existing resource-base coupled with the existing system of provision cannot be adapted to provide lifelong learning for all in a learning society, even in developed nations. This must be radically rethought and reorganized.

Ball (1994, p. 16)

In the previous chapter, data related to authority for decision-making at various institutional levels with respect to education were presented. This chapter addresses the next four research questions that dealt with (1) factors affecting resource flow to basic education in Ghana, (2) major constraints affecting the provision of education by the central government, individual citizens and the local communities (3) what proportion of educational funding should be borne by the local communities and other organizations, (4) the community mobilization of resources to improve education. In this chapter, responses on the resource contributions being made by various institutions and organizations as a function of the decision-making authority are presented.

A variety of categories established from the interview responses indicated that there were several institutions and organizations active in providing various resources for basic and secondary education in Ghana. These categories provided the theme: contributions from various partners in the provision of educational resources. In this chapter the theme is presented under six sub-sections representing the six institutions and organizations which were identified as partners working together to provide educational resources. These institutions and organizations are (1) the central government, (2) district assemblies, (3) local communities, (4) Parent-Teacher Associations, (5) individual schools, (6) foreign agencies (loans and grants), and (7) inividuals and organizations. An additional sub-theme derived from the responses was the sharing of educational responsibility between the two major partners: the central government and the local communities.

Contributions from the Central Government

Most respondents, national headquarters directors, regional and district directors of education, assistant directors of education, headmasters, teachers, parents and community leaders acknowledged that in the provision of educational resources the central government was the major partner. However, the extent to which the government was assessed as the major partner in providing for education differed among the various groups and within each group. The four headquarters directors interviewed were generally positive in their assessment of government's efforts. One headquarters director, for example, noted that education was labour intensive dealing with human beings, and as such, the greatest part of expenditures went into the payment of salaries of teachers and other personnel of education. According to the present arrangements, the central government pays all the salaries of teachers in educational institutions, from pre-school to the universities.

A district director of education agreed that it was the government that paid the teachers and supplied textbooks and technical tools as well. According to the director, the government brought in a box full of tools for each school and some science materials for the junior secondary school program. Another district director observed that even though the communities were doing their best, their best was not enough and thought the district assemblies should be able to help. The assemblies were, however, unable to bear adequately that responsibility, hence the government had to step in. This senior official remarked:

> The government realizing that most of the communities haven't got the resources, started coming in through the PAMSCAD [Program of Action for Mitigating the Social Cost of Adjustment] project. This assistance has been very good in the sense that through that we have been able to get a few of the *workshops* completed. But most of them haven't been completed yet, and we hope now that the assembly is on it again, we will appeal to them to see to it that the whole thing is completed.

A district director mentioned an ongoing school roofing project that was partly being financed by the government. According to the director, the government contributed one million cedis towards the project. A senior district administrator also described the part being played by the government in the district.

A district assistant director in another district, however, felt that even though the central government was certainly playing an important role in the district, the role was not adequate. He explained that textbooks supplied were not sufficient. He complained that stationery and, textbooks especially, were not available on the local market. He suggested that the government should bring more of those books to the market for parents to buy. A senior teacher in a secondary school was also not very positive in his observations about the government's role. He was of the view that:

> In some cases the government's contribution is not very encouraging. There is a policy to the effect that certain essential equipment and facilities should be provided by the central government. In some cases these are not forthcoming. In my own former school -- a senior secondary school -- the community has played its role. The science laboratory for three years is still not usable. Even though the authorities have provided all the science chemicals and materials, furniture for the lab is not there. So for three years, no practicals.

The above comments suggest that the government's contributions seem to be more effective in some districts than in others. While some districts appear to be satisfied with the resources flowing from the government, some districts are not and are asking that textbooks, for example, are at least made available at the open market so that while the government's supply was not in, they could fall on their own resources to buy from the market. Headmasters of primary, junior and senior secondary schools expressed various views about the part which the government was playing. In general, their comments reflected more positively on the government's role as the following comments from two school heads:

> The central government pays the salaries of teachers; provides textbooks; gives grants (5% of the national cake) to the district assemblies. This year, for example, part of this grant will be utilized for education.
>
> I think the government is doing what it can. Our textbooks are all supplied by the government plus other equipment. So when the community is brought in to help the government, it will be very good. Since the introduction of this reform the textbooks we have received here have been enough.

One school head who did not sound so positive on the government's role observed that:

> The government is paying scholarships, other charges, and maintenance of buildings. We have to submit estimates, make contacts here and there before we get things through. This is rather discouraging. The money we need to operate quite often delays so much. The central government may give approval to a project but getting it through has been a problem.

These comments suggest that school administrators recognize the central government's contributions, but at the same time feel the government could offer more. Teachers' description of the government's role was similar to those provided by the headteachers. They seemed, however, to be more concerned with textbooks. Two teachers commented as follows:

> The government bears the payment of teachers' salaries, supply of textbooks, and stationery. Students pay a minimal user fee of ¢250 per year. The money is not adequate. Consider that textbooks are supplied at the beginning of an academic year, and for a period of about nine years that is all that we will use. We didn't know when we were going to get the next supply until just last month when they started supplying us with some more.
>
> The central government comes in with textbooks and what-nots, and pays teachers' salaries. The community helps when we have some work to do in the school, but it is the central government that sees to the funding of the school properly.

Other respondents whose role in education was more indirect as compared with directors of education, headmasters, and teachers, also described what they believed the government was doing in the provision of educational resources. Among these respondents were a public relations officer, an assembly member and a regional budget officer. The public relations officer pointed to the government's responsibilities including:

> Payment of teachers' salaries, provision of school infrastructure, especially the provision of buildings and textbooks, tools and equipment through loans they contract with foreign governments. The district assemblies are supposed to provide furniture and sometimes maintain these buildings, but their resources are so poor that they cannot do that. The central government is doing its best, but its best is not enough, because of the magnitude of the problem. There are so many schools which, if they tell you that this is a school, you will not believe it. Everything has broken down to a level that will make you refuse to believe that it is a school. Go to some schools and you will see that the children have no furniture and so they sit on the bare floor. In a situation like this there is very little that can motivate the teachers and students to learn.

An assembly member, however, believed that the government was doing well and noted that:

> The central government helps a lot. We receive *ceded* taxes from the central government. These taxes are apportioned to the various electoral areas based on their needs. For example, if Abodom or Bobikuma wants to build a KVIP [Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit], we give them some funds from these *ceded* taxes. We might then give say, one million cedis to Bobikuma for KVIP and ¢200,000 to Nyakrom to help them organize communal labour.

Parents also noted that the government was doing well. One of them said:

> The central government has been doing quite well in the sense that judging from the economy of the state and the fact the government has taken it upon itself to establish so many schools throughout the length and breadth of the country, the resources are unable to meet the demands of the schools.

Another parent, however, was of the view that the government was helping but such help was not sufficient. The parent remarked that if parents got some loans from the government to work with, that could give them something real to spend on their children's education. One other parent did not know exactly what the government was doing since they were sometimes asked to pay some money towards school expenses. The parent stated, "I haven't heard of government supply of books. The children don't bring any books home except those I buy for them." These comments reflect different points of view from parents. They also suggest some unawareness on the part of some citizens who had children attending school but might not be aware of whatever the government might be doing for the school children.

The point made by respondents was that the government was providing the resources -- payment of salaries of educational personnel, assistance in the construction of school buildings and other structures, supply of textbooks, stationery, and equipment -- for education. However, because of the magnitude of the resources required, the government's efforts did not seem to be enough to provide for education. Some districts seemed to be more satisfied with the government's contributions but acknowledged that the government could not do everything. Others who were not so satisfied felt the government could do more than it was so far doing. Moreover, the supplies from the government were not made in good time. All these suggest that other sources of school supplies were needed to provide adequately for education.

Contributions from the District Assemblies

The district assemblies were established by law as a major organizational instrument to give meaning and effect to the devolution policy. As the highest decision-making body in the district, district assemblies were expected to use their legal authority to mobilize the people within their jurisdictions to provide social amenities and services for the towns and villages. The manner in which they utilized their authority in the communities was therefore an important deciding factor to the success of the policy implementation. Respondents were asked to describe the efforts being made by the assemblies.

An assembly member dwelt at length on what the assembly was doing. The following description was given:

> We have sub-committees within the district assembly. These are social services, justice and security, finance and administration, and executive committees. I am a member of the social services sub-committee. One of the things we have been able to do in education is to institute bursary awards to needy students. These are students adjudged to be bright but whose parents may not be able to afford the educational bill. The bursary was instituted by the assembly to help such needy students. The assembly also instituted a special levy to assist the schools. Parents or guardians are asked to pay this levy. This levy is used to assist in the construction of JSS workshops for the various schools throughout the district. The levies are paid to the schools, but the schools are accountable to the assembly in that respect. A sub-committee usually meets to take a decision which they take up to the executive committee for further discussion. Thereafter the decision is brought before the whole assembly to deliberate on it for approval and implementation.

Another assembly member explained the sources of assembly funds. According to the member, assembly funds generally came from market tolls, taxation in the form of levy, property rates, timber concessions and others. The respondent said the assembly was able to generate adequate funds from these resources. The assembly member stated that the assembly offered bursaries to a number of students selected from all levels of schooling in the community, but particularly at the senior secondary school (SSS) level. The following explanation was given:

> The bursaries are awarded to needy students who are entering senior secondary school. This bursary scheme was started as far back as 1990 after the establishment of the district assembly. The assembly started with one student who was then at the [Name of secondary school]. This was a highly bright student with poor parents and when the assembly learned of the problem, it decided to assist him with funding. The student was then admitted to [Name of secondary school] where he got access to boarding facilities. Thereafter the assembly decided to continue providing some more awards to students. The district has six circuits and two students are selected from each circuit to be financed by the district assembly. Twelve students have benefited annually from this scholarship scheme since 1991. We realize that it is at the SSS level that the student needs to spend a lot of money and so requires more help. So the assembly helps basically at the SSS level with the bursaries. At the JSS, an award may be given to those who have excelled in sporting activities.

According to the member, apart from awarding bursaries to deserving students, the assembly also helped in cases where a school needed some roofing sheets and sawn logs. He noted:

> I quite remember that in my own area we had to fall on the district assembly for some roofing sheets to repair the roof of a school ripped off by rainstorm.

Other respondents in the interviews described the contributions being made by the assemblies in their communities. Many of them were, however, of the view that the assemblies were not living up to expectation. A headquarters director and a district director made the following comments:

> The assemblies have some responsibilities towards the schools in the form of providing infrastructure and so on. Hence the district director of education works within the framework of the district assemblies. Therefore sometimes when the directors are in need of money for something they inform the assemblies, especially if it is related to structures and so on. Because of this some of the assemblies have taken the liberty to impose some levies -- they call it "Education Fund" -- and the Minister for Education is not happy about it.
>
> In the district I can say that the government is doing its best, but at our level we have the district assemblies that should do more.

Another district director felt that the district assemblies needed to be oriented to know exactly what they have to do, because most of them did not know what they had to do. A senior school administrator pointed out that:

> As a resident of [Name of town] I don't know what is going on in the assembly. I know that they have a number of committees, including an education committee, that are responsible for various matters in the district. But I don't really know what

> is going on. Sometimes I myself remark at some point that I am not seeing much. I haven't seen anything significant that is being done by the assembly. So I myself have some questions to ask.

Two junior secondary school headmasters noted:

> The assemblies are not playing any important role. The only thing is that they have agreed that parents (PTAs) should contribute certain sums of money to the schools. They have also introduced some scholarships to needy children -- bright pupils whose parents are not able to send them to secondary school; that is, those who will pass the Basic Education Certificate Examination well. The students are given some bursaries.
>
> For the district assembly we don't see their direct involvement; we don't see anything like yesterday or today the assembly gave us this or that. What they are saying is that the school's community should offer us help but this is not forthcoming. However, they have approved that parents should pay ¢1000 each for renovation in the school. So they count that as a help they have given us.

In describing the assembly's role, teachers generally did not think the asemblies were making significant contributions in the communities. One of them, for example, stated::

> The [Name of assembly] introduced a metropolitan education levy of ¢1500 per pupil per year in 1991. This levy is paid in three installments of ¢500 per term. This money was meant for school development, e.g. to provide furniture and to maintain the school structures. Unfortunately many of the school buildings were already weak and so the assembly has not been able to carry out the educational projects they proposed to carry out. They only try to concentrate on some few schools. At [Name of city] for example, the Anglican school building has fallen down. The city council provided some furniture to the schools last year, but that was not adequate. This was paid for out of the ¢1500 levy. If you consider the amount paid by individual schools, you realize that the pieces of furniture supplied were grossly inadequate. Nothing has been supplied this year and yet they are still collecting the money.

A public relations officer said:

> The district assemblies don't have enough funds because they are in the formative stages and for many of them, revenue collection methods are faulty. They are not able to collect enough funds; they even find it difficult to pay their employees satisfactorily. So they don't have enough funds to finance education to the level that is expected of them.

A parent observed:

> The assemblies were established with all community problems in mind so that they could find ways and means of solving the people's problems. The first elected assembly did nothing. It is only the recently elected assembly which is trying to do something. For example, in order to generate money to repair street lights in the city, ¢300 is added to every light bill we receive. Even though we pay this extra amount regularly, the street lights are still not repaired. At nights our streets are

> very dark. We don't see to what use they put all the money they collect, and that is one big reason why the people are often reluctant to pay any money they are asked to pay.

A district budget officer mentioned the traditional sources of revenue for the district assembly as basic rates, property rates, market fees, building permits, alcoholic licenses, drinking bars, court fines, grant from the central government, stool lands from the Lands Commission. In relation to the assemblies' mobilization and use of local funds, the budget officer explained:

> The assembly is not under any restriction in the use funds. We know the assemblies are supposed to be development oriented. It is at the back of their minds that at the end of the day they should be able to do this or that. If they don't do that, it will even be very difficult for them to collect revenue from the people. If the people don't see any improved services, improved conditions of living there will be a problem. Revenue collectors even say that when they go round to collect revenues people ask them, "What have you done?" So it is in the interest of the assemblies that even though they are under no restrictions in the use of money, they try as much as possible to utilize some of the funds for development projects.

At the time of the interviews in Ghana, the Auditor General had just released an Annual Report which blamed the district assemblies for utilizing only 15% of their total revenues for development projects in the communities and 85% on administrative expenses.

The district budget officer gave the following comments on the situation:

> It is a very serious situation, but honestly when you look at the expenditure patterns of the assemblies, you realize that some of their expenditure patterns are somehow genuine, because there is so much pressure on them. Sometimes you find that there is a district or national program such as a rally, or may be World Population Day program, and personalities are coming from the regional capital or from the headquarters. We have to commit some funds to get the place in order to get the function going. So the assembly is compelled to commit some funds. Sometimes the assembly does not get prior notice. They may not have even budgeted for it, but then they become committed to the function, and have to raise money to carry on with it hoping that later the central government or the regional administration will reimburse them, but that money never comes.

From the budget officer's comments on the Auditor-General's report, it may not be too difficult to understand why other categories of respondents did not see much that was being done for the communities by the assemblies which were established to lead the communities in developing social programs. The budget officer's explanation also suggests that central government puts some spending pressure on the assemblies. Hence, the government itself may bear part of the responsibility for the assemblies' inability to spend substantial part of their revenues on the provision of social amenities and services.

Two assembly members, on the other hand, mentioned at least bursaries that were being awarded to deserving students. The general comments suggest that the awards were also not quite popular in the districts since only a few students described as "well-deserving" benefitted from them.

A university administrator noted that according to the Education Act of 1961, the local authorities were responsible for putting up school buildings, furnishing them, providing textbooks and so on. This Act had not been changed. In principle it was still in operation. The local authorities were not able to do much. He noted, however, that:

> Now local authorities in the big towns are able to provide those facilities very effectively. It is in the rural areas that these are not effective because the authorities don't get enough funding to meet these costs. At the moment the government has assured the assemblies of some assistance, and they have a number of fund raising avenues which enable them to do something. So that if the government is able to give them something and they supplement this with their own efforts, the assemblies should be able to help their communities to help the schools to play their roles, the role that is enshrined in the Education Act of 1961 which requires them to put up school buildings, furnish them and so on.

These comments suggest that the assemblies are only able to do so much because they do not have enough funds. While the two assembly members were positive in their contribution to education, views from other respondents do not support the notion that the assemblies were contributing enough. They had power to impose levies, and this was acknowledged by some respondents as the only efforts of the assemblies. It seemed therefore that they would continue to look up to the central government for supplementary funds to play their expected role in education.

Contributions from Community Members

Directors, headmasters, teachers and parents described the efforts being made by the communities in the provision of educational resources. In the main, they referred to contributions including repairs on damaged schools buildings, making and repairing furniture for the schools, and organizing fund raising activities to raise money for the schools. One of the district directors noted that the communities were involved in quite a number of things, especially in the provision of land, preparation of the land, for example, for putting up school buildings, making voluntary contributions, and providing free communal labour. These were normally done through the district assemblies' initiatives.

One senior district administrator said that at Okwabena village near Bawjiase in the Central Region, for example, the people had been mobilized within a couple of years to put up a six-block school for the community. Another district administrator observed that

> The policy of new reforms makes education community-based. It means the community has a role to play. In this case some communities start a school building and the metropolitan assembly comes in to finish the project, e.g. a recent school at Aboadze and Dwomo near Sekondi. They started the building and the government roofed it for them. Other villages have similarly been involved in the district.

In line with this view, another senior education administrator thought that an appeal ought to be made to the communities to get them convinced of the need to involve themselves in the current educational efforts. The contention was that even if a citizen did not have a child in the school at the moment, the citizen's grandchild or grand daughter might be admitted to the school one day.

Headmasters of senior and junior secondary schools did not think the communities were sufficiently involved in the provision of educational resources. Referring to community involvement, a headmaster of a boarding senior secondary school declared, "As far as this school is concerned I will say that such involvement is nil." The explanation according to the headmaster was:

> I think that is because this is a boarding institution, and to a large extent is very removed from the town. The people feel that the school does not belong to them; a day school might be different. We made some attempts to involve the community but these have come to naught.

A junior secondary school headmaster said the school's community had not been involved or were only partially involved. One head said that at one point the school appealed to the community for some loan to undertake a school project. Part of the needed funds was provided as a grant but it was not sufficient. The school planned to look for help elsewhere. The head explained:

> There has been no response except this academic year. Our toilet facility was destroyed by rains and we needed funds to construct one. We appealed to the community to give us a loan which we would repay when we collected our PTA contributions. We needed ¢100,000 and when we appealed to them for help they said they were also putting up a KVIP [Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit] toilet in the town so they were hard up. But they gave us ¢50,000 free of charge to use. This amount is inadequate, but we have given the project to the PTA which is going to see to complete it with the help of the Town Development Committee.

The following are comments from two other junior secondary school headmasters which suggest different views about community involvement in school affairs:

> During open days, we invite some people, those who have interest in the school -- whether they have children here or not. We sometimes distribute envelopes to solicit for funds. We also invite the past students. For example, one past student

> gave us a substantial donation; some donated trophies (shields). We have also been informed that past students are organizing to come and help us.
>
> At times we solicit for some help from those who understand to come to our aid. The district assembly has instituted a ¢1000 per year levy for every parent in the district to pay. We send part of this levy to the district education office and use the rest for the smooth running of the school. Generally the people are friendly, they are not hostile and they come to ask us how things are going on often and often. As far as this school is concerned they are doing their best.

Two teachers also noted that members of the communities were helping. One of them said the community was involved in the day to day activities of the school, especially when it came to the putting up of workshops and supply of furniture. However, the teacher defined the community as those who had their wards in the school -- parents and every citizen who had a ward in the school. According to the teacher, at times when they wanted to levy the children, they had to pass it through the community, because they had their wards in the school. Another teacher said the school community provided communal labour to help in school projects, but if any assistance involved money, they could not help and the following was the explanation:

> The reason why I am saying it is due to poverty is that even when we are collecting ¢2000 for a whole year, we find it very hectic. As at now, even some of the junior secondary school form 3 students who are due to sit for their final examination and should register for those exams, couldn't afford paying their registration fees which is around ¢3000. Some of their teachers had to volunteer to pay for those children. And I can recollect about eight such children whom the teachers have paid for. Also we have about 15 children who have not been able to pay their school fees. When the school workshop construction was in progress, they organized a fund raising harvest to generate money. That harvest did not give them sufficient money. The whole project has therefore been abandoned.

It was also noted that the communities needed some motivation to be able to contribute towards education. In the interviews, some respondents did describe the roles being played by the communities without mentioning the PTAs. A district director said that in the villages some of the people undertook commercial farming to support their schools. In the urban areas, however, schools were supported mostly by the PTAs.
A parent pointed out:

> I haven't seen any levy that has been imposed on the people of Sekondi municipality to pay. It is only in the rural areas that some of the communities have been asked to make some contributions to education. The city council's housing agent collects property rates of ¢3000, ¢8,000, and ¢16,000 to generate funds for development projects in the municipality. This is because, as they realize, the community has no other reliable sources of income for projects. Always it is the PTAs of the schools which contribute to help the schools, but many of us do not attend PTA meetings to be able to contribute.

A regional budget officer remarked that:

> The local communities have been talked in to assist in funding education at the basic level. When the reforms started, the idea was that all primary and junior secondary schools were to be community-based. The original idea was for the communities to put up educational structures for the government to run them. But because of the weak financial base of the local government, some communities organized around PTAs, Town Development Committees (TDC) to put up these structures. Many communities failed. So we are now running into a situation of lop-sided development in this country. Where communities helped then there may be resources.

A public relations officer also said:

> From the very beginning of these educational reforms, we knew that education was community-based in the sense that authorities were encouraging the communities to participate in the activities of schools by contributing to the provision of infrastructure like school workshop, furniture and other things that the schools needed. But we realized that there were so many districts -- those we normally refer to as deprived areas -- where there was so much poverty with the people that it was not possible for them to contribute financially to provide the schools with amenities. Because of that they could not help their schools very much. In some ways we have PTAs which have been functioning well in some places, because they have been contributing towards the putting up of buildings. They tax parents to pay in addition to the school fees with which they put up school buildings. They also finance other projects in the school. But so far as the towns' people are concerned -- funds coming directly from the people -- that has not been very effective.

All respondents observed that the communities were contributing some educational resources. Communities included individual citizens irrespective of whether they had children attending school or not. These contributions included the building and repair of school buildings and workshops, and the provision and repair of furniture, provision and preparation of school lands, and the provision of free communal labour. The extent of such contributions differed among the various communities as, according to some respondents, efforts to involve the people in some communities did not attain much success. It also depended on the resource endowment of each community. Respondents noted that community members could not contribute money because of poverty. Some respondents felt the community contributions were being made through the PTAs.

Contributions from Parent-Teacher Associations

Parent-Teacher Associations consist of parents of the students in a school and all the teachers working in that school. However, it was noted that only parents usually contributed resources, particularly money for the schools. Therefore, in the words of one senior administrator:

> The "PTA" is a misnomer. If it is an association, then all members should contribute, but it is known that teachers do not contribute any money except that they bring their problems to the parents at meetings. Only those teachers who are parents contribute. It is, however, agreed that contributions of teachers is found in other directions.

The resource contributions being made by the Parent-Teacher Associations were acknowledged by most respondents including directors, school heads, teachers, and community leaders. It was significant to note that most of the parents interviewed could not describe what the PTAs of their children's schools were actually contributing, apart from the money contributions they made. As noted in the previous chapter, most parents were not present at PTA meetings to participate in decision-making, but were prepared to abide by those decisions. The situation suggests that most parents do not, in fact, know what the PTAs to which they are supposed to belong, are actually doing. School heads, on the other hand, were particularly positive on the role being played by the PTAs of their schools. As noted in the previous section, when some respondents were asked to describe the contributions being made the communities towards education, some of them mentioned PTAs as a school's community.

One district director pointed out that the PTAs form an important agency being used as an avenue for building structures for the various schools. According to the director:

> A PTA has been able to put up a three-classroom block at the Advanced Primary School grounds. The PTA of the Advanced JSS [Junior Secondary School] has also made about 2000 blocks to put up a structure for the JSS.

According to one assistant director, before the introduction of the metropolitan levy, it was the PTAs which helped in providing educational infrastructure such as buildings. This levy was paid only by parents who had children in the schools. However, when the levy was imposed, some PTAs found it difficult to provide such infrastructure because they were already paying towards education in the form of levies. Therefore they felt that it became the duty of the metropolitan assembly to provide educational resources, and no longer the PTAs. Other PTAs were, however, still helping in the repairs of their schools. This observation suggest that the imposition of levies on parents which were enforced by law, made it difficult for many of them to contribute to PTAs as well, which could not be enforced by law.

A headmaster of a senior secondary school observed that the school's PTA was actively involved in providing for the school's needs. According to the head, the parents supplemented whatever the government was doing. He also noted that the parents were very understanding. They knew that the money which the school was operating with was not all that good and so they sympathized with the school authorities. At the same time, however, there were parents with genuine financial difficulties, said the headmaster. The school authorities tried to accommodate such parents. The head noted:

> A number of things have been done for the school. For example, some dormitories have been modernized and improved for the girls. They have provided furniture, and have made repair of bungalows, toilets, baths, and kitchen. They have also gone out their way to rent houses for the teachers.

One headmaster of a primary/junior secondary described his school as undergoing a very wide extension in its primary and junior secondary school departments.

Two other heads described PTA contributions in the following words:

> We don't have anything like reserve funds. If, for example, we need roofing sheets, we fall on the parents and they contribute. They buy roofing sheets to repair the damaged roof. I invite the chairman of the PTA for executive meeting. We make some estimates. Then a general meeting will be called at which the total cost is shared among the parents.
>
> At PTA meetings we inform them that we have run out of drugs. They contribute to get say ¢3,000 which we use to buy some more drugs. We also have some nurses among the members who sometimes offer some help.

Teachers, like headmasters, recognized the contributions being made by the PTAs in their schools. One teacher who said the school lacked a number of amenities like canteen and drugs noted that the PTA accepted to provide those amenities because, according to the teacher, "if you tell the central government, they are not going to do anything. It's all money." Other teachers made the following comments:

> When any problem arises, we invite the parents and together with the teachers, we find out how best we can solve the problem of the children. I will say that in my school the parents are outstanding towards the development of their children.
>
> There are so many problems to be solved. It is not only the workshop that is engaging our attention. Sometimes we have to consider providing furniture, putting up of toilet, etc. In fact, just recently through the PTA, we have been able to put up about four toilets.

> At the moment the PTA is paying a levy of ¢1500 per child per year. Out of this money we make repairs, buy furniture, and we put up a toilet for the school.

A university administrator and budget officer dwelt at length on the efforts being made by the PTA of a university primary school and public primary school, and made the following remarks:

> At the moment the PTAs are doing very well. For example, the PTA of the University primary school has been doing fantastically well. They provided an amount of money to the tune of ¢3 million to repair the school building, and to provide furniture. Some of these PTAs are doing very well and the heads know this. Heads organize the PTAs very well. University of Cape Coast primary school has been a very good school since its inception so many years ago (late sixties) in every situation: academic performance, physical facilities, etc. they have been doing very well. Because of that every citizen in Cape Coast municipality wants to have his child here.
>
> We built the workshop. The government said all communities should provide workshops for their schools. So we contributed. Parents paid ¢2000 per child to build the workshop. Other schools could not and so have no workshops. But we are trying to create a fund for education development. Therefore all children pay ¢1,500 into that fund for help in education.

The point made by respondents is that in the provision of educational resources, the PTAs are a strong partner. Teachers do not contribute physical resources but in other directions such as identifying the schools' problems. Though many parents do not personally get involved, they abide by PTA decisions and so make contributions as may be required. PTAs make monetary contributions, put up buildings and other structures, provide other facilities such as furniture as well as repair them. High academic achievement and good leadership make a PTA effective in its contribution.

Contributions by Individual Schools

A number of respondents, particularly directors, heads, teachers and parents, noted that many individual schools were making efforts to raise some funds to provide some of their own needs since they could not rely on external sources for everything. One national headquarters director explained:

> Schools can generate funds through various activities they undertake, for example, crafts and agriculture produce. These can be sold to generate some more funds for the schools. If these things are done within the districts, the money is used for that particular school that generated it. If a school makes, say ¢50,000, it must be paid into the school's account. When they need a few roofing sheets or some furniture, the head informs the district director and uses part of the money for whatever they want to do. Apart from this, the schools cannot use the children in some of these activities, especially at the basic level.

An assistant director at a regional office dwelt at length on the schools' efforts by noting that:

> Some schools, especially in the rural areas, are able to farm to get some proceeds to improve their own financial situation. But here a note of caution should be sounded because the students may be misused. Everyday they may farm instead of learning; that will not do. So they should know how to operate their farms properly. Technical schools, for instance, can take care of private cars. They can repair cars to make money. Students can mould bricks. They can even go and build houses for people. The time table should be arranged in such a way that they can do that. Electrical students can repair things for people to get money. There is a lot of room for schools to take care of this. Elementary schools are those that may not be able to do very well in this aspect. Sometimes they carry stones for people to get money, but I maintain that schools should be careful so that they don't overuse the children.

Two district directors observed that some of the schools in the villages engaged in commercial farming and other ventures to support themselves. One of them explained the situation as follows:

> The only thing the individual schools are doing is school farming. Some of the schools get money from their school farms. The money they get goes into their accounts which they use for one or two things. Such activities are approved but they should be done after school hours, i.e. after 2 p.m. The pupils should stay in school. If, however, there is agriculture on the school time table, then obviously they can go to do some work in the garden. There should be effective teaching in the school. We don't want the pupils to lose contact hours.

One district assistant director did not think it was appropriate to use children to generate funds for the school, and the reason was that parents were not happy to see their children being used that way. According to the director:

> As for the schools generating funds, sometimes there is a limitation here. How do you expect schools to provide funds? They have the curriculum enrichment program. But at the same time as soon as parents see their children being put to labour, like collecting stones and so on, they complain. So I think teachers should be spared this ordeal of funding a school so that they can concentrate on teaching and learning.

Heads of schools described various activities being undertaken by their schools to raise additional income. The following are some of the activities described by two heads which reflect different situations in their schools:

> When we need cement, for example, we normally ask children to bring palm kernels to crack; sometimes we collect stones to sell, or carry sand to builders for payment. Money accruing from such menial jobs are used for maintenance purposes. Sometimes we collect offertories at our Wednesday school worship. We use part of this money to buy some minor items such as clocks. At the end of the academic year, the money left is used to organize party for the entire school.

> When we worship on Fridays and the students listen to the word of God, they offer a few cedis which we collect and add to the central fund. The central fund includes ¢100 PTA contributions which we use to repair furniture, locks, and some materials such as brown papers for exhibition work. So for these petty petty expenses we don't look up to the government for funding. We try to be resourceful in this respect. In this location whenever it rains sand collects. At a convenient time when we feel outside activities will not disrupt school activities too much, we carry sand for a few thousand cedis, and that helps us. The curriculum enrichment program allows us to engage in such activities, provided we use the funds judiciously.

One of the heads explained that the school used to undertake activities such as carrying sand and stones, etc. to raise some money to support the school. However, as soon as the district assembly imposed a levy of ¢1000 on the pupils, they stopped all fund raising activities. Another head expressed concern about their inability to use some children services to generate additional funds since they could not increase school fees because many parents were unable to pay even the present amount. The head observed that the use of children for fund raising purposes could mean child abuse which should be addressed. According to the head, if that was addressed, the children could be asked to bring stones from home to school to sell to get some additional funds.

Teachers spoke on their schools' fund raising activities. The following comments reflect teachers' views:

> For our first aid the children give some offering at school worship, and the proceeds are used to buy a few of the school's needs. The district office is aware of it. And this is actually not compulsory; it is a free offering and the children know the purpose to which the money is put, for example, to buy drugs for their own use. We account to them so there is no problem. We have a school farm too. If we are lucky to have a good harvest, we get some good money out of it.
>
> Formerly we were issuing out cards to the students to solicit money from the community. But parents were complaining that it was wasting their children's time and so agitated against the operation.
>
> Fund raising is done through school farming or gardening and sometimes carrying of stones about once a week.

Parents were asked to express their views about schools utilizing their children's services to raise funds. Their views reflected both support and rejection of such activities. One parent who thought it was fine for the schools to use the children's services for their own welfare explained it this way:

> They have time for break, and time for gardening. So if they use the time for gardening for other school jobs, that is good; after all it is not the teachers who should work to keep up the school for them. That is the children's responsibility. I don't have anything against that. In our time we swept our own classroom, and

> worked in the garden on competitive basis. Through this competition we got money for the school. So it is fine for the children to do some jobs to raise money.

Another parent, however, pointed out clearly that he was against the idea of the schools using the services of the children to raise money. The parent suggested that in place of children's activities towards money-making, a school should organize a special appeal for funds on the following lines:

> Envelopes should be printed and distributed to parents and other citizens. Then an open day at which parents are invited should immediately follow -- seriously speaking. Even the District Chief Executive should be invited to attend if he has time because all these are part of his responsibilities in the district. If he cannot be physically present, he can send his donation. The proceeds from such appeals should go to support the school to provide some of its needs. This type of appeal can be done about three times in a year.

A community leader also pointed out that parents generally did not support the idea of children being asked to undertake some labour to make money for the schools. The leader suggested that it should be the school community's major responsibility with some minor contributions from the children to generate money for their schools. The community leader offered the following suggestion:

> My view is that the community should liaise with the headmasters to establish some community farms to generate income for the schools. But a lot depends on land owners or opinion leaders of the community. They have to release vast plots of land to the schools. The community should then be engaged in farming for the schools. The schools can also help to maintain the farms by weeding around the crops. Some communities like Mangoase have sand; this can be dug to sell to building contractors. The proceeds from this project can be given to the school or alternately they can be divided into three: one-third to the school, one-third for expenses, and one-third to the community.

Although there was no laid-down policy for schools to organize activities to raise additional funds, the general impression was that many schools were organizing some fund raising activities. There were no common activities for all the schools which suggest that heads were free to undertake any activities. These activities which seemed to have official approval included farming, communal work, crafts making, carrying of sand and stones for sale, collection of palm kernels, and worship offertories. Technical schools could undertake car repairs, laying of bricks, and building of houses. The money accruing was expected to be paid into the school's accounts and was to be used for such purposes as buying roofing sheets, furniture, clocks, first aid drugs, and school parties.

Contributions from Foreign Agencies

Respondents were asked to express their views about foreign aid and indicate to what extent such aid should be solicited. Responses indicated that there have been significant contributions of various types from foreign agencies for the education reforms. There was also a fair amount of support for soliciting such assistance. One headquarters director, for example, explained at length:

> Since the beginning of the education reform, foreign assistance has been of immense help in the provision of education in the country. We started with the Education Sector Adjustment Credit. The IDA [International Development Association], an affiliate of the World Bank, provided the bulk of the funding for the educational reform program. There were other donor agencies like the British Overseas Development Association (ODA), Norwegian fund, UNDP, UNICEF, the African Development Bank, and the USAID for the Primary Education Program which was a grant of $35 million to help improve primary education in the country. So since 1987, foreign assistance has been of immense help in our education reform. Before then the Ministry didn't have any major foreign assistance for education. There were, of course, some organizations like CIDA putting up technical institutes or providing some workshops here and there. But the real donor assistance started with the reforms. In all, the World Bank has been able to mobilize resources up to about $400 million to assist educational programs. This constitutes about 15 percent of the total educational expenditure. This assistance has been spread through all levels of education -- primary, junior secondary, senior secondary, university and non-formal education. There are other projects supported by these donor agencies which we are currently implementing.

Another director said that the World Bank was going to put up additional 1,983 pavilions throughout the country. The Bank was expected to erect the roofs and pillars for the communities complete them, a task that was expected to greatly reduce the communities' financial burden. Two district directors noted that money coming from foreign agencies in the form of loans were in order, provided such loans were judiciously used. There was also a need to establish a soft loan-payment agreement to foster easy loan repayment by the recipient country.

Two district assistant directors also pointed out that:

> There has been a lot of assistance from foreign bodies, especially the NGOs [Non-Governmental Organizations]. The World Vision is doing a good job in this country. CIDA is also doing a good job. I can give specific examples in my own area -- Ahanta-West District where the workshop for Agona Nkwanta junior secondary, for instance, was provided by CIDA. A lot of schools and nurseries have also been built by World Vision. The Adventist Relief Agency, USAID and other agencies are in the process of helping education in this country. So taking advantage of foreign assistance should be encouraged.

> Well, as regards contributions from other circles, I know that recently the African Development Bank (ADB) has come in to help the poor areas where community members cannot build their own schools, e.g. Mampong and Nyakrom. These communities are very poor so the ADB is putting up school buildings for them.

One headmaster explained what the US government, in collaboration with the University of Cape Coast, was doing for his school as follows:

> In 1992 I had a letter from the Director, University of Cape Coast Centre on Research for Improving Quality Primary School Education in Ghana. The US government realizes that for the JSS system to be successful, the primary school program should be well structured and well-equipped with a strong foundation. The weak foundation accounted for the very poor JSS results. So the US government has donated $5 million for all primary schools called Primary Education Programme (PREP). A number of schools have been selected for studies and research, and because the University of Cape Coast is committed to education, this project has been handed over to them to manage. Seven schools were selected out of the 12 districts in the Central Region, and seven in the Western Region. My school was one of seven selected by the headquarters. The project will be on-going in the school for five years.

Teachers also agreed that the idea of seeking or accepting foreign aid was laudable, and observed:

> I think foreign assistance is OK. They say, two heads are better than one. We have our local currency, and if we are getting some foreign currency in addition to our own, that will give us something better.
>
> Without foreign loans our junior secondary school program wouldn't have taken off; so I feel the loan concept isn't bad. It has come to augment the finances of the government and as a result, changes are taking place.
>
> We see the effect of foreign aid in our school in the form of PAMSCAD [Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment]. They usually come in to inspect your *workshop* and assess the progress you have made, e.g. if you are at the roofing level. Then they offer to help you with roofing materials. In fact, they have helped us a lot. Since the reform started they have been able to provide some pavilions for the hinterland schools. So far they have provided about 656 pavilions.

In the same vein, some parents expressed support for soliciting foreign aid for education. One parent noted:

> The idea of foreign aid is quite laudable because we have a proverb in Akan which says, "Nobody has been self-sufficient in anything at any given time." So all states are interdependent in some way. Ghana is a developing country. We need the resources, both natural and human, to develop. If we cannot afford to develop our human resources effectively and we have friendly countries willing to assist us in this regard, I wholeheartedly support it. Because there are so many pupils in the system who when given the right education could perform very well and grow up to assist the society in its development.

Another parent, however, said:

> We the common people do not hear much about the foreign loans which the government is contracting from foreign governments and agencies. It has all been confined to government circles. How much loans they collect and who gives what, we are not made to know. We do not know how good the terms for these loans are. We have the impression that some loans were taken to initiate the junior secondary school program and that the loans must be repaid.

A community leader felt that if the community leaders, particularly the district assemblies, were effective in leading the people, foreign assistance might not be necessary. He explained:

> There are two alternatives here. We can stand on our own feet to pay for our education, but we need a "bait to catch the fish." But as I have often emphasized, if only the district assembly is effective, we can provide many of our needs. In that case we would not need to go in for foreign aid. We could rely on our own coffers, but this does not exist and we are feeling its side-effects. In the advanced countries all these things are there. We were not brought up this way and so at some stage we struggle. When the erstwhile PNDC advised us to form associations, e.g. the GPRTU (Ghana Private Road Transport Union), we did not see the need, but now we see the wisdom in it. Now members of the GPRTU are well off and are being granted loans to put up mighty houses. This is because, as a Union, if they collect income taxes for the government, they are paid some percentage at the end of the year. So we have to embrace that move to improve our lot. Otherwise we will always have to go to borrow for our development which is not the solution.

A regional budget officer expressed a different view by suggesting that foreign donor assistance is another source from which the central government should be able to attract more for education, especially from non-governmental organizations. Foreign aid like World Bank assistance for the restructuring of the educational sector and the USAID for education development are foreign help with which the government is putting up bungalows for headteachers in the deprived communities. The government is also putting up school pavilions in areas where the people cannot put up classrooms from their own resources. The policy is that the government will put up the pavilion and the local community will fill it up with blocks. The budget officer explained the situation this way:

> In a situation where we have a financial gap -- that is between what we should have and what is actually on the ground -- we should all go in for foreign assistance so long as we can obtain it. I don't subscribe to the argument that by getting more loans to improve the social sectors, we are piling up loans for our future generations. So long as we are going to produce quality people to be able to manage the resources better, the savings from better management can as well go to pay off those loans. So I will call for more assistance from left, right, centre, and everywhere we can get loans from to improve the quality of education now so that the graduates coming up will be better qualified. If we look at what is happening in South-East Asia, people are saying that they are taking off industrially because they concentrated on that.

The general consensus was that through the efforts of the central government, a number of foreign agencies like the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, British Overseas Development Association, African Development Bank, and World Vision, are providing assistance in the form of non-refundable grants and refundable loans especially since the educational reforms started. Such forms of assistance have been utilized to fund various educational projects such as the provision of textbooks for some selected primary schools on experimental basis, construction of school pavilions as a start-off point to encourage poor communities to provide schools for themselves, construction of staff houses to attract more qualified school administrators and teachers to more remote areas, and workshops for the schools.

A few respondents expressed pessimism about the utility of such foreign assistance because they felt there might not be good accountability in the use of such loans which would have to be paid for by later generations. Many respondents, however, thought that since Ghana could not rely on its own resources to provide fully for education, all available foreign resources should be tapped to improve education. Returns from such improved education might then be used to repay the contracted loans. For several decades private individuals and organizations had made good contibutions towards the provision of education. The need for private education did not seem to decrease under the reform program. Respondents were therefore asked to describe the contribution being made by private institutions under the reform program.

Private Education

Private educational institutions had played significant role in the development of pre-university education. To broaden the base of pre-university education, private institutions were expected to continue to provide education along side the public system. The research sought to examine the quality and extent of such education. Most respondents supported private education provided that they operated within national policy guidelines and within affordable means. Many respondents noted that the quality of private schools was higher as compared with that of public schools. Two headquarters and five district directors, six headmasters, four teachers, four parents, and two public officials expressed various views in support of private education. Two headquarters directors supported privatization because the government was unable to provide adequate education to all its citizens. One director observed:

> The open market system is gaining currency all over the world right now, taking into account the fact that education is just a reflection of the entire society. There is

> something to say for encouraging private participation in education. But this is not to say that the government should disengage itself or divest itself completely from education. The policy is to encourage private participation, so that private people become partners in education. We should all admit that the government cannot on its own provide everything. So what is left should be taken over by private people. Looking at the existing schools we all agree that the private schools are efficiently handled.

Comparing private schools with public schools, one of the directors at the headquarters agreed that the quality of schooling in the private sector appeared to be better than those in the public sector and attributed the situation to the problem of supervision. The director was of the view that private schools were better supervised. The director observed:

> The private school proprietor sits in the school from 7.30 or 8 a.m till closing time at 2 p.m. He will not allow teachers to do their own thing or remain idle. He will just dismiss a teacher from the school and find another person. In the public system apart form the headteacher who functions as the first line supervisor, it takes time for officers even from the circuit level to go to the school. If, as an officer, you have 20 schools under your care, you cannot go there everyday. And so it is lack of supervision and teachers' negative attitude to work that cause the problem. Public school teachers know that whatever happens they will be paid their salaries, and nobody will reprimand them if they don't go to school any day, unless the headteacher is a very strict person who will record everything. There are sanctions for a teacher who becomes absent for ten days without permission. This implies that the teacher has vacated his or her post. All these regulations exist, but who is there to enforce them?

One district director noted that private schools were very common in the urban areas but had not caught up well with people in the rural areas yet, and were a relatively new thing. He reasoned that since the current trend was a shift towards privatization in every public sector, education could not be left alone. The director referred to an association of private schools and suggested that the association should be strengthened so that they could have their own bye-laws to govern their schools. The director felt that some private schools emphasized profit-making and performed a limited role of helping children to pass national examinations while neglecting the overall development of the individual as a citizen.

A senior administrator in a senior secondary school said that very few people had experimented with the private school idea in his district. According to him, those who attempted to provide private education did so as commercial schools only, but none has been able to function effectively. He noted that whereas people may be genuinely motivated to provide private education, they become confronted with the problem of fees. He argued, "If students cannot pay ¢2,700 per year in public schools, how can they pay ¢40,000 or ¢50,000 per term in private schools?" He observed that once a school was opened and advertised, students would seek admission and enroll, but the schools would soon be confronted with the problem of collecting fees. He added:

> We have one private school that is financed by a mining company. So the kind of education they are providing is a high quality education and you see many wealthy parents bringing their wards there. But as soon as the company began to have problems with balancing its accounts, teachers were not paid their full salaries for many months. They were paid only a percentage of their earnings.

A district assistant director asserted that private individuals and groups of people required a lot of money if they wanted to be self-sufficient to run their schools effectively. He explained that with the advent of the new junior secondary school program, some individuals opened private junior secondary schools. They operated up to a stage and were even supplied with books by the government, but the payment of teachers' salaries became a problem to them. The assistant director suggested that in order to achieve high success, private schools would have to operate in conjunction with the government. Another assistant director referred to a government policy that supported private education and said it was a good idea that individuals and organizations that had the means were involved in the provision of education. He compared the organization of public schools with private ones and observed:

> When a school is privatized, the manager stays with the staff in the school. Supervision is constant and good. But come to the public system and we have a director sitting in the office with about 200 or more schools in his district without any means of transport; how does he supervise? This is one problem with the public system. Look at this office: it has only one vehicle and even when you want to move out, there is a problem with fuel. A whole office has only about ¢300,000 for transportation for the year; how long will it last? So in fact there is a problem with supervision in the public system because the schools are many and scattered all over the district. But when you come to the private schools, you find that the manager has only one school, and sometimes has his home close by. He is always on the people. And when a teacher is not working hard he would warn or even dismiss him. But in the public system teachers know that they have job security whether they work hard or not, and this is a problem.

The assistant director agreed, however, that private institutions charged high fees but up to a limit. He noted that although a school may be private, the children enrolled there remain the property of the state. The district directorate therefore reserved the right to move in there under some regulations, and there were limits beyond which private schools could not operate. He pointed out, "If a parent observes that his child in the private school is doing well, it doesn't matter how much he would have to pay. A commodity of high quality of course attracts a high price." Therefore, according to the officer, it was up to the government to provide facilities to enable the district officers to move out to supervise public schools. Another district officer said privatization was a very good policy since a lot of private schools were doing very well, but there were some inherent problems. He noted:

> Private schools are producing very good scholars. The only snag is that because of their profit motive, it is very expensive for the ordinary person to take advantage of that facility. Apart from that because it is profit oriented, they concentrate only on a number of subjects even though the Ministry has ruled that private schools must conform to certain standards. They are now under the Ghana Education Service so it is the responsibility of the district directors or the GES to ensure that they conform to the set standards.

In their responses, headmasters commended private schools. They identified some of the organizational bottlenecks of public schools as opposed to what they believed to be the good points in the operations of private schools. One headmaster commented on privatization as follows:

> There should, in fact, be good education on private education. What I see is that education financing is a burden on the part of the central government. Considering the manpower resources generated from education, I would advocate an education fund into which all institutions which derive manpower from education should contribute. Each member of the working class should be asked to contribute say, ¢100 towards education. Then firms and corporations which are benefiting from the educated personnel should also be taxed in a way to establish a central fund. Apart from the government providing money from the consolidated fund, there should also be a central fund into which we should all contribute. We should face the realities of life when it comes to the funding of education.

In order to deal with the problem of laxity on the part of teachers in public schools, one headmaster said that since teachers in government schools were not as serious as those in the private schools, school heads should be given the authority to discipline lazy teachers. The headmaster felt that inasmuch as those in the private schools were getting high quality education, the exorbitant fees they paid did not matter much. According to him, "As long as quality education was offered, paying money was fine." He noted that in the government schools students paid only ¢350 a year. Consequently, the quality of public education was very low, and that low quality education in the long run would not help the nation much. Another headmaster, however, expressed concern that "fees in private schools are already high and most of the people are poor and can not afford. Therefore, the establishment of an education fund will be the best solution to the problem. How can you control the private individual who runs his business on the principle of profit making?"

Another headmaster pointed out that although private schools charge high fees, some people had money and were prepared to pay for their children's private education.

Therefore, private schools would always want to charge heavily because of the notion that there were people who would pay any amount of money for good private education. The headmaster, did not, however, support such private schools, because many parents were not able to pay even the low fees charged in public schools. These varied observations suggest that the government itself might find it a challenging task to control the cost of private education as long as people believed in the high quality of such education and were prepared to pay for it.

A headmaster of a well-established senior secondary school was of the view that in private schools there were so many things the head could do without having to consult the management, for example, the improvement of teachers' work in the classroom. He noted that "If a teacher is not working well it is a matter of replacing him with somebody who can work. When it comes to children's needs, the parents are prepared to provide all their needs. It is not a matter of people quoting what you should do and what you should not do. If, as a head, you feel there is something that you should do to improve the situation you get ahead."

Teachers, like many other respondents, were positive in their comments on the operation of private schools in the reform program as illustrated by the following comments from one of them:

> In private schools the proprietors try as much as possible to raise the image of their schools. That is the only way they can get a lot of students. So the supervision there is very very strict. At times it is not acceptable to the teachers themselves but since there are no other jobs for them, they are compelled to abide by the strict measures of the management. In the public school since the headmaster is not the proprietor, there is more congenial atmosphere.

One teacher noted, however, that students in private schools were often good at speaking foreign languages, but fell short in other areas of learning. In this regard, pupils in public schools did better in other subject areas, because although private schools were serious with their learning, they didn't emphasize much on other areas as was the case in the public schools. "So if private schools will do well to hammer on those areas, then I think it will be fine with them," the teacher concluded.

A parent with children in both public and private schools pointed out that private schools had their positive and negative aspects in the communities. The parent noted:

> Private education is a good idea, except that it overstretches the pockets of some parents. Private schools should exist side by side the public system. What I have seen is that supervision in private schools tends to be more effective than it is in the public system. But teachers in the private system are usually not as qualified as those in the public system because of low salary payment by the proprietors. Therefore, I think if the government should encourage the operation of private

> schools, then they should permit teachers to be seconded to private schools to strengthen the staff there. If the government assists in this manner, the high fees we pay in private schools will go down.

When the parent was asked to indicate which of the two systems (public and private) offered better educational results, he said private schools offered better results. The parent was then asked to explain the notion that less qualified teachers in private schools produced better educational results than did better qualified teachers in public schools. One of the parents observed that pupils who come from the average and higher income homes are more likely to pay their fees on time than are those from the low income group. According to the parent, a child who goes to school with no financial and other problems, is well fed at home, and is given adequate material support, will study more smoothly than will the pupil from low income home who may go to school handicapped in many ways.

One parent, however, did not support private schools and said, "I don't favour private school because if you fail the final examination there, you are not given a second chance; but if you attend a public school and fail, you are given a second chance, although some of the private schools are better than public schools." The parent added, however, that people should accept the fact that "all fingers are not equal" meaning that there are inequalities in income levels. He explained that somebody might have acquired his wealth through lawful means and could justifiably utilize private school facilities. Such a person cannot be prevented from sending his children to a private school. He said, "Generally in Ghana low income earners are far more than high income earners. If some arrangements can be made, for example, about the exorbitant fees charged in private schools, that will allow some low income earners who wish to attend private schools to do so, and that will be good. That may reduce the envy and jealousy on the part of the low income earners." These comments suggest that many people would subscribe to the private school idea, since many of the comments support the view that private schools provide higher quality and more expensive education than are provided in public schools.

Two other officers, a regional budget officer and a public relations officer, spoke generally in favour of private schools. In his observation, the regional budget officer agreed that private schools had been and were providing good education in the country. The problem, however, was people's perception that the continued pursuit of private education created class stratification in the society. That perception meant that the rich would have access to the highly efficient schools to pay more to get quality education. This was distinct from the poor citizens who could not pay to receive good education. According to the officer, this situation would ultimately create two grades of graduates: those who got into private schools and got better education, and those who went into what was formerly known as "cyto" [inferior quality] schools. The officer, however, observed that it was beneficial to the country as a whole to operate both public and private schools. He contended:

> Almost all public schools are known as "cyto," but I don't see it that way. If we can allow privatization so that those who can afford will move out of the public system, then central government will concentrate and improve the quality of education at what we call "cyto" level and bring it up. You see, if we don't allow privatization, the well-to-do people will come in and compete with the not-do-wells in the government schools. The net effect is that they are going to drive away the less fortunate ones. So we should encourage privatization, but as a strategy to improve public education at all levels. We should allow the private schools to operate and charge any fees they want, but give us five years and the public schools should be able to catch up with them in the long run. If we are able to achieve even 60 percent of what they are doing now, a lot would have been achieved.

The public relations officer noted:

> I believe that private schools are necessary to encourage the private sector to serve as partners in the provision of education in the country. We realize that the government has not got all the resources to carry the whole educational burden. Therefore, through private participation, parents who can afford to send their children to such schools can do so and pay the necessary fees. Others who don't have the money can continue to make use of government schools. Private schools can offer some competition to the public schools and that will motivate them to improve upon their performance.

In spite of the general notion that private education was costly to provide, and its curriculum was limited in scope, the most common view was that private schools were offering effective educational services alongside the public schools.

Summary

All categories of respondents, directors, headmasters, teachers, parents, and other public officers, supported private education. It was noted that private education was encouraged because the government could not provide adequate education to all its citizens. It was observed that even at the current expenditure level, the government spends about half of the national budget on public education. Hence, private individuals were encouraged as partners in the provision of education as early as in the 1960s. The government, however, cannot encourage too many private schools, because of too high expenditures particularly on the part of low income groups who formed the majority of the populace. Many private schools operated at the basic education level with fewer at the secondary level. Some individuals established institutions such as commercial colleges. Others opened new senior secondary schools, but their performances were yet to be properly assessed. Private schools were also more common in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

Private education was also encouraged in line with the modern trend towards privatization of government departments and organizations. The government has, however, established a Private Education Unit of the Ministry of Education to ensure that private schools operate within the national policy guidelines. In line with that objective, public officers are sent out to inspect schools. Some publicly trained teachers are also seconded to teach in private schools. Textbooks are also supplied by the government.

Respondents largely referred to the advantages that private schools had over the public school system. They observed that private schools provided better learning opportunities, and hence better quality education. Supervision was much stricter and teachers were more serious. Parents were generally from the average or higher income groups, and because of high quality education, such people were prepared to pay to enroll their children there. Parents were responsible and were prepared to provide the school's needs. Children from such well-to-do homes were likely to pay their fees on time, be well-fed, have private teachers to teach them at home, have adequate material support, and consequently, smooth learning. Private school proprietors tried to raise the image of their schools since it was one important factor to attract more students. In this respect, they served as competition to the public schools.

There were, however, some disadvantages with private schools. Private schools required lots of money to be self-sufficient, and therefore emphasized profit-making, which was a barrier to many people who would otherwise like to use their facilities. They operated a narrow curriculum emphasizing only those subjects offered at the national examinations and foreign languages and neglected other subject areas. Students who failed their final examinations did not have any second chance. Some of their certificates were not nationally recognized. They largely employed untrained teachers, although because of strict supervision, such teachers managed to do more effective teaching. Payment of teacher salaries was a problem to many of them. Some private schools did not have good classroom structures. Through the education they provide, they encourage social stratification by creating upper and lower class citizens, which in turn, create social crimes since some people would adopt any means to obtain money for affluence living including costly private education.

There were disadvantages with the public system as well. Supervision in public schools was more difficult to undertake because of logistical problems such as lack of transport to move around to the schools scattered all over a school district. Public school teachers were more qualified than their counterparts in private schools, but did not seem committed to teaching because of the notion of job security. Sanctions on defaulting teachers were usually not applied. In spite of the advantages and disadvantages of private education, some respondents suggested their continued operation along side the public system. They noted, however, private schools needed to be controlled in many aspects of their operations such as charging limited fees and offering a broader curriculum. An education fund could be established to provide good facilities to the public schools to compete with the private schools.

Sharing the Educational Cost Between the Government and the Local Communities

In the previous section, it was observed that although different organizations were providing for education, responses indicated that the central government and the local communities were the two biggest contributors under the reform program. Respondents were asked to describe from their perspectives how the financial cost should actually be shared between the two major partners.

Headquarters directors were of the view that the government was the major funding institution for pre-university education, and they felt that was the way it ought to be. It would, however, be difficult to request the government to do more than it was doing. One of the directors pointed out that in 1994, for example, education took 40.7 percent of the recurrent expenditure of the national budget. Out of this amount, basic education took 65 percent. It would therefore be really difficult to push the government, with all other sector ministries, to suggest that education should take 50 percent or thereabout. That measure would be hard on other sectors of the economy. The director explained that the heavy burden was being carried in spite of foreign assistance and noted that many donors are currently operating within the education sector. Hence it would be difficult to call upon the government to increase its contribution to education. The director, however, felt that there was a need to consider efficiency in the use of the resources available while a call is made to the communities to contribute more. The director observed:

> I think there need to be efficiency in the use of resources. The local communities are saying they can't do much because of poverty. Where can we draw the line then? When we started the reforms the communities were enthused about the whole thing, and they worked hard. Some were able to put up workshops, but the enthusiasm is now waning, because it isn't education only which is taxing them. They have to see to their own bore-hole water, electricity, and so on to provide. So most of them are really far taxed and for the poorer communities, they are finding it very difficult. So we are trying some other possibilities. For example, we are putting up 1000 pavilion schools. We asked the communities to build the walls, but they were not able to do so.

A district director was also of the view that the central government was already so much burdened and as such could not be saddled with more. For example, salaries of teachers weighed so heavily on the government that it cannot see to other areas as well. Hence the director felt that the communities should be able to help the government in footing the education bills. One school head, however, said that even though the government was doing quite well, they expected it to do more. He said:

> For education financing, even though the government is doing quite well, we expect more. To achieve maximum results we expect more. For assistance to the schools we expect the government to provide more funds to improve the technical and vocational aspects of the reforms. For example, some children have come to the school seeking admission here. We don't have enough furniture for their use; and it is a problem. The entire furniture which the Council provided has broken down. If you ask individual parents to provide furniture for their wards to sit on while in the school, only a few parents can afford to provide that.

Other heads of school were also of the view that the government should still bear more of the financial costs in spite of what it has been providing. One of them suggested:

> If I am not mistaken, this year, for instance, a lot of pupils have not paid their fees. The parents tell us that there is no money in the system. We think the government can subsidize the school fees. Formerly it was a fee-free education. So some parents are asking that something should be done as far as the school fees are concerned, that the children should have fee-free education, as some parts, if I am not mistaken, of the northern region are doing.

Expressing a similar view, a public relations officer observed that the government was trying to do its best, but it was not enough, and that it must try to provide more funds to the provision of facilities. The officer suggested that the government should not try to push much of this work on the shoulders of the local communities since they are not rich enough to shoulder that responsibility. A parent also noted that:

> Provision and repairs on school building and all that goes into it should be the government's responsibility. Government should take a larger share of the finances required for education. Textbooks, teachers' salaries and other things should be the government's responsibility. After taking care of these major responsibilities, the rest can be divided to us parents to pay for.

A community leader explained the sharing responsibility this way:

> You can realize that the burden of the central government is huge. We have 110 districts. We have 4,820 electoral areas in Ghana. The government has to oversee all these areas. So it is up to us, parents and community leaders in the districts, to be more effective in helping the government. The government is playing its role in the districts. What help will come to a particular district will depend on the type of request it lays before the government. Suppose you ask for ¢10 million, the government will consider it, and if it can provide say, ¢2 million, you should get

> that to start something. You realize that the junior secondary school program was started as far back as 1974. When money was released it was misused. So when the PNDC came to power it realized that it was time to implement the program fully. An order was made to every school to build its own workshop. But after a careful analysis, it has been found that some parents are finding life difficult. The government therefore approached the EEC, for example, for some pavilions. Every district has got some supply. The objective is to assist the poor communities and parents.

Accordingly, the community leader felt that the communities can and should do more than they have so far allocated to themselves to do in terms of providing for education since the government's hands were already full. In the same way a budget officer thought that calling upon the government to provide more to education from the current national budget is a highly improbable objective to pursue because with the problem facing the economy, the government cannot do more than it is doing now.

In relation to sharing education costs on percentage terms between the central government and the local communities, the budget officer said:

> I don't believe in talking about absolute percentages. It depends on the circumstance. Ideally basic level education is the responsibility of the community. So that the community should bear 100 percent of the cost at that level. It is community-based and so the local community should pay a greater percentage. But in a situation where the central government seems to be funding the entire 100 percent, we will then have the central government dictating the curriculum and whatever. But we should be able to see a situation where the central government pays teachers' salaries, while all other things are provided by the community. And talking about paying teachers is already a huge sum. If you consider the education budget, about 85 percent of it goes into personal emoluments.

These comments point to the suggestion that it is generally not considered feasible to ask for more money from the central government under the current circumstances. It also suggests the need to get the communities organized to show more commitment to education. It is believed that community commitment may be a way out as the following comments made by a senior administrator suggests:

> I don't really believe it is so much the economic situation, but people's perception about education. The economy is hard for everybody in this country -- without exception. Nobody is being paid sufficiently to be able to get everything; yet people do things with their meager resources in relation to their perception of their importance. I believe when we let people know that education is central to whatever we do in this country and therefore people must be prepared to pay, it should be possible. Let me give you an instance, only six years ago people were paying ¢3 per term. Now they say cost recovery; and so parents are asked to pay ¢200. The percentage increase is more than 1000, and yet people are paying.

Hence, this respondent was of the view that if the policy of sharing the educational burden was vigorously pursued, and people saw the need for it, they might find the resources. Then the situation where central government is funding almost 100 percent of education in Ghana would be changed.

Summary

All categories of respondents agreed that the government is making strenuous efforts in providing for education. A number of respondents therefore thought that given the current level of government expenditure, it would not be economically viable to ask for more resource inputs from the government. There is also a notion that the communities are not pulling their weight in finding the resources for education, and this may be due to lack of commitment to education rather than poverty. Other respondents, however, thought the communities were faced with general poverty and so were not in a position to contribute more than they were already doing.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has been devoted to the four research questions that dealt with (1) factors affecting resource flow to basic education in Ghana, (2) major constraints affecting the provision of education by the central government, individual citizens and the local communities (3) what proportion of educational funding should be borne by the local communities and other organizations, (4) the community mobilization of resources to improve education.

On the factors affecting resource flow to basic education in Ghana, it has been observed that the provision of educational resources has been a shared responsibility among five partners: the central government, district assemblies, local communities, Parent-Teacher Associations, individual schools, with foreign agency assistance. The central government is, however, the major contributor. It has been responsible for the major expenditure item, viz: the payment of salaries to teachers and other education personnel. It also provides major resources like textbooks and stationery, and other learning tools, and offers some scholarships. The government has also mounted programs through which it provides assistance to some communities, particularly the very needy ones. Such assistance enables the needy communities to undertake some constructions like pavilions, workshops, schools buildings and staff quarters. The government also allocates five percent of the total national revenue to the district assemblies to help them to undertake community projects as well as provide social services. The government seeks some assistance from foreign agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to improve the provision of educational services.

With regard to the major constraints affecting the provision of education by the central government, individual citizens and the local communities, the general expectation among senior government officials and stakeholders in education is that the government should continue to assume the role as the major contributor. However, because of the magnitude of the task of providing adequately for education, the government's maximum efforts do not seem to be enough. Therefore, while some respondents believe that the government's educational efforts have been stretched to the hilt, there is still some expectation that the government can and should do more. For example, the government has undertaken the major responsibility of supplying of textbooks to all schools. Not all schools, however, receive enough of such supplies and in good time, a situation that creates dissatisfaction among heads of schools.

On what proportion of educational funding should be borne by the local communities and other organizations, the district assemblies are legal bodies established to direct community development efforts. They are expected to lead the communities to undertake development projects and provide social services to supplement the government's efforts. The assemblies have, however, been confronted with financial problems, even though they are assumed to possess many sources of revenue. Apart from the notion that they provide some scholarships and bursaries, it does not seem like they are making great impact in their localities. They are also confronted with financial management problems because of the observation that very little (15%) of their total revenue goes into community development. Hence, they continue to look up to the government for financial assistance. However, to be able to discharge some educational responsibilities, the assemblies are empowered to impose school levies on the communities.

For cost sharing between the central government and the local communities, it was expected that since the government's hands were already full, the communities would provide the missing links. The government has been overstretched in its provision (40.7% of the national budget for 1994), and that if it should continue to increase its allocation to education, other sector ministries would be left uncatered for. It is doubtful if education's allocation should rise, for example, to 50 percent of the total national budget. The communities are therefore expected to continue from where the government would end up. Yet, for example, there is a token textbook user fee which, according to headmasters, many parents are unable to pay. The observation is that the communities are unable to bear the extra responsibility for educational provisions. It has therefore been difficult to draw a line between where the government should end for the communities to take off.

The communities are expected to undertake self-help projects as well as provide social services. While a few of the communities have been able to get organized for community development including the provision of communal labour, the building of workshops and the supply of furniture, the notion is that many communities are helpless because individual community members are poor. However, there is also an impression that the communities' inability to contribute meaningfully towards education is not so much the problem of poverty, but due to lack of community awareness and commitment to education. Other communities seem more concerned about social amenities than they are about education.

With respect to the community mobilization of resources to improve education, it has been noted that for most schools, help from the communities comes from Parent-Teacher Associations and such help comes mainly from parents' contributions. Most respondents praised the PTAs for what they have done and continue to do for their schools. PTAs build and repair school buildings, provide workshops, furniture, and school facilities like toilets, bath, kitchen, canteen and drugs for use as first aid.

Individual schools undertake some fund raising activities to generate some funds for petty expenses. Such activities include farming, carrying stones and sand to sell, collection of offertories at school worship, and issuing cards to students to solicit for community contributions. The money accruing from such school activities are utilized to repair furniture and locks, to buy materials for school exhibition, school clock, and to organize school parties. Such activities seem, however, to be questionable because they do not have the full support from official circles and even among parents, because of the possible misuse of students. Some parents declared their opposition for such activities while some district officials questioned why children should be made to undertake fund raising activities. However, in spite of such opposition, such activities continue in the schools since schools cannot hope to obtain all their needs from outside sources.

Foreign aid has made significant contributions to education. Types of foreign aid are obtained through agreements reached between the central government and some individual foreign agencies including the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Canadian International Development Agency, the United States Agency for International Development, and the British Overseas Development Association. Funds provided from such foreign agencies have been utilized to provide staff living quarters, pavilions for schools, textbooks for primary schools and means of transport for some institutions. There is general support for such assistance provided funds are judiciously used especially since they are loans to be repaid at a later date.

On private education, respondents noted that it made a lot of sense to permit private schools to operate alongside the public schools. Among the reasons to support private schools were that: the government could not provide adequate education to all its citizens and that even at the current expenditure level, the government spends about half of the national budget on public education. It was also in line with the current trend towards privatization of public departments and organizations. The provision of education was, however, a primary responsibility of the government, hence it could not encourage too many private schools. Private schools largely operated at the basic education level and only to some extent at the secondary level. Such schools were more common in the urban areas than in the rural areas.

Through the Private Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, the government provides some assistance to private schools by providing inspection officers to inspect them, seconding trained teachers to teach there, and by supplying them with textbooks. Respondents noted that private schools had many advantages over the public school system. These include providing better learning opportunities, and hence better quality education, stricter supervision and hence more effective teaching. People from the average or higher income groups preferred private schools because of high quality education, and were prepared to pay for it. Proprietors raised the image of their schools to attract more students.

There were, however, some concerns with private schools. They required lots of money to thrive, and seemed to be too much concerned with profit-making, a barrier to poor people. Their curriculum was too narrow and focused only national examination subjects and foreign languages. They employed teachers of low calibre, although such teachers managed to do some effective teaching through strict supervision. Some private schools did not have good facilities such as good classroom structures. It was also noted that private school education led to social stratification -- upper and low class citizens, and hence social crimes.

The public system had its own demerits as well, for example, lack of good supervision. Although teachers in public school were more qualified than were those in private schools, they did not do effective teaching because they enjoyed job security. In order to improve public schools, more funds could be mobilized through the establishment of an education fund.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ACCESSIBILITY AND UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

". . . by the year 2000, 5 percent of the GNP should be allocated to education, and at the same time that steps be taken to lower the costs, i.e. by using freelance teachers and teacher brigades, double shifts and multigrade classes, and finally by falling back on private financing and loans for higher education students."

Carron (1995, p. 5)

Data on various organizations and institutions contributing diverse resources for education were presented in the previous chapter. The research also sought to determine what impact these aggregate resources were having on educational programs. Consequently, an important theme that related to resource provision was education authorities' access to resources to run the day-to-day educational programs. Resources refer not only to fiscal provisions and educational infrastructure (buildings, furniture, workshops, means of transport, equipment, etc.) but also teachers' and students' welfare services. To address these issues, administrators including headquarters, regional and district directors of education, school-based authorities, parents and community members were asked to explain whether the total funds derived from various sources and educational infrastructure for school programs within the previous five years had increased, decreased or remained constant. This chapter addresses the research question: What are the factors affecting resource flow to basic and secondary education? The interview discussions were extended to include possible measures that could be taken to increase educational resources. In this chapter, data related to the theme are presented in nine sub-sections: (1) resource flow, (2) increasing user fees, (3) district endowment fund, (4) loan scheme, (5) accountability, (6) cost-effectiveness, (7) weaknesses in financial practices, (8) welfare services, and (9) distribution of schools.

Resource Flow

A number of respondents, particularly headquarters directors, indicated that the government's total financial allocation to education from the national budget had been increasing in the previous five years culminating in a relatively high percentage (40.7%) for education in the 1994 fiscal year. Respondents were therefore asked to describe the resource situation within their jurisdictions in the previous five years.

District directors were officers who normally presented financial requests on behalf of their districts through their regional directors to the headquarters for approval and disbursement by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. District directors differed in their responses about the adequacy of funds they had been receiving from the government and other sources over the previous five years. While some directors said the total money and other resources had increased, others said resources, particularly government subventions, had decreased over the years. One director who thought resource flow to his district had been flowing well said:

> I have been in this district since April 1991. I will say that so far as this district is concerned, resources have increased according to the population of the children. As the number increases it is our responsibility to feed the Ministry with statistics. At the end of the year they supply the quantity of materials we need according to the statistics we submitted. Whatever we send, it is complied with, because I have to append my signature under it. So in that regard, I haven't had much problem. At the moment I have quite a number of textbooks in stock and we are waiting for a truck to distribute them.

When the director was asked to what extent he was satisfied with the level of resource supply, he replied, "I wouldn't say that I am fully satisfied, but taking into consideration the limited resources of the nation, the little that comes here implies that there is as much share going elsewhere. And so we think the government is doing its best even though what we receive may not be sufficient. In the light of the circumstances in which we are operating I am satisfied." Two other directors noted that although the resource situation was not totally satisfactory, it had improved somehow within the previous few years. They made the following comments:

> I have been here for three years. When I first took over the administration, there were some financial problems. We were told to operate at a quarter of our F.E. [Financial Encumbrance]. It was not all that easy -- fuelling our only vehicle at a time when I travelled around a lot was a problem. We were operating far below our F.E. because the money wasn't coming. Nowadays we are operating at a full F.E. At least it is better than what it used to be.
>
> Initially when I came here, resources were somehow significant, but later on due to constraints from the top, things were cut down. The quota due us was reduced, but of late it has been increasing.

On what could be done to generate adequate funds for the district, one director to declared:

> I wonder what we can do; because we are sharing with others. It is what is there that is shared among all of us. So I don't think it is right for us to complain that we are not getting enough. We make do with whatever we get. That is why we are here. We've got to use our initiative to get the job done.

In his suggestion regarding what could be done when financial administration has not been decentralized, the director was of the view that:

> The government has to take immediate steps to decentralize financial administration. Everything depends upon money. If I had got my district treasury officer here in

> the district approving all my F.E.s (financial encumbrances) and so on, and we had not centralized this sort of administration, it would have worked well; now there is something wrong with the system. So financial decentralization is absolutely necessary. That will help smoothen out a whole lot of problems. This does not pertain to education alone. It affects all sectors of the economy. Financial decentralization will bring efficiency. Because this means that we have somebody at the regional level determining how much must be given to the district. But if I have all my records in Accra [headquarters] and they know there are problems, then these problems must be solved.

A district assistant director observed that it is difficult to ensure that all levels of government are playing their part effectively in education. According to him, they used whatever grants they were given out of what they had presented to the government in the annual budget estimates. The director noted that one way of ensuring that districts get what they request as much as possible is for their director at the headquarters to defend such estimates. Another district assistant director referring to the situation pertaining to education personnel remarked:

> I won't say resources have increased. Whatever was supplied are available in the schools. Sometimes the materials are there but we don't have the personnel to teach the subjects. Some of the materials have remained idle. The second problem is the element of security. At the moment thieves have started breaking into these offices to steal the tools. All watchmen [security personnel] have been withdrawn from the schools at a time when tools have been dumped there. Appeals to the authorities to consider bringing these watchmen back have not been heeded. They are saying that the communities must take care of them. How do you expect a community leader to be watching tools in the schools? It is not realistic.

The impact of the lack of qualified teachers and security personnel is that the few resources that have been procured in the districts are not only failing to serve their purposes, but are being wasted through thefts. Therefore the officer suggested:

> It is up to those who are planning education to listen to the grievances coming from below. Here are people who are working in the field, and they are telling you [the planners] that these are the problems which you must seriously address. Yet the planners simply tell the field workers that there is no money, but at the same time are expected to monitor school operations. How do they monitor when they cannot move out? So I think something should be done.

The officer did not agree with the official expectation that teachers should deal with the problem of finding funds for educational development. According to him, "the government that has committed itself and is planning, must find the money. Teachers should not be saddled with monetary problems." Another senior administrator described the supply of tools and observed that given the purpose of the tools -- to expose children to some basic skills -- the amount supplied to each school was adequate:

> Some technical tools for the junior secondary schools arrived at the district office. We ensured that every school within the district had its share. Every school had one box of such tools. So tools are part of the items we inspect when we go on school inspection. We check the tools in each school to ensure that they tally with the list of tool inventory. If the tools are meant only to expose the students to basic skills, then the amount of tools supplied to each school is not bad. If you examine the package of tools, you will agree that for somebody who is only to be exposed to some basic skills, the tools are quite enough. In fact, the package contains some tools which you will not find even at the workshop of a professional carpenter.

From the perspective of six school-based authorities, the total provision of resources was generally inadequate. Different views were expressed by them. Only a few heads said the total supply of resources had improved over the years. A good number of them noted that their supplies had been fluctuating or had deteriorated over the years. One senior secondary school headmaster explained the situation as follows:

> Our resources have been fluctuating. The powers that be, when they see that there is something sinister (pressure) in the offing, then they sort of squeeze something there and then to help. Then they relax when they see that the problem has been solved. We are facing financial constraints and the government itself is unable to cope with the demands made on it. For example, the government decided to help us complete our building complex. This wasn't done, and this year it has been put in the budget again.

Two junior secondary school headmasters who were quite positive said:

> Resource flow in the school has been increasing over the past few years. For example, formerly the PTA paid ¢200 per pupil to make furniture for the school. This year they are paying ¢2,500. This money is used to provide furniture at our carpentry workshop. This has helped to provide the school with a uniform furniture.

> I will say our resources have increased because it is out of these resources that we have been able to roof the building. I won't say we have enough money to do whatever we would like to do, but at least we have something that helps us to maintain the building and other things.

One headmaster noted that because the tools were simply kept in the school, and were not being used, they were being pilfered. In order to curb pilfering, the headmaster explained the introduction of a "tools movement book". Under this plan, if a teacher needed a tool for use in his lessons, he would sign for it and be personally responsible for its return to the storage. Two other headmasters observed that what they needed to operate in the school, particularly stationery, were usually not brought in at the right time as the following comments illustrate:

> Textbooks and stationery come through the district office. The stationery comes late -- not at the time the children need them to write. We need exercise books, pens and pencils for supply to the students. At times only exercise books arrive minus the pens and pencils which the children so desperately need. So we go in for only the few items that may be available. Then we are forced to go to the private bookshops to buy them. The government sells a pencil at ¢10, but if we don't receive our supply at the right time, then we have to go and buy from the private dealers at ¢25. Sometimes we also appeal to the parents to buy them.
>
> The textbooks are adequate; we have enough textbooks; but the only problem is the stationery: exercise books, pens, etc. The school reopens for the academic year, and for a whole term stationery will not be coming. Teachers will just have to rely on the old ones.

Asked about how they were coping with the problem of stationery, one of the heads said:

> We have appealed to the government and suggested that the books should be in the market with reasonable prices so that parents who can afford to buy them may do so for their wards so that when these children go home the textbooks will be accessible to them. Those who cannot afford may still rely on the government's supply.

According to one headmistress, the resource flow to her school on the average had remained about the same; there had been no significant increase. As she put it, "if I am not mistaken, this year, for instance, a lot of pupils have not paid their fees. Their parents tell us that there is no money in the system." The headmistress therefore felt that the problem could be solved by asking the government to subsidize school fees. She noted that "formerly it was a fee-free education. Now some parents are asking that something should be done about the school fees, and that children should have fee-free education." One headmaster explained that money flow to his school had not been adequate, and observed that:

> For government grants we have received only ¢14,000 for the whole of the academic year. This money is meant for technical and vocational skills. And if we actually want to make the teaching of these subjects effective, then we need more money. The funds coming from the central government are inadequate. The PTA is, however, contributing substantial amount to the school. This year we have been able to re-cement about four classrooms and their verandahs. So what the parents are doing is adequate.

Another headmaster noted that, "for last year and this year I will say that resource flow to the school has been constant." According to the head, the value of the total amount they received the previous year did not change, but the amount of work that the money could do had increased. One of the heads explained that the policy of the government was such that school heads could not make any monetary request from the community. The situation, according to the head, was that:

> When materials have not been supplied by the government, we cannot ask children to provide them. When we ask children to do so parents come and question us: "Why should we provide these things? Is it not the government that should do it? Why should we provide this?" The way in which information gets to parents from government makes it difficult to get some of these things done. If it was a private school where we are given a free hand, we would know that children should have tools so we can levy the children. Then we would use that money to buy tools for them. We were able to levy the children for the workshop. For that project the government permitted us to collect ¢1000 per parent, but this amount is all the money for everything in the school. And we find that we have to buy this, we have to make that -- everything.

The point being made here is that if the government was genuinely unable to make all supplies to all schools and in good time, then the heads should be given the authority so that in consultation with the parents, they could take appropriate measures to obtain the schools' needs to operate.

Teachers did not differ much from the heads in their views about the resource situation in their schools. The following comments illustrate the views expressed by three teachers:

> We depend much on the PTA. The PTA members have realized the need for special levies that we have to collect. So depending on our needs, they are usually considered.

> I am not happy at all, because in many classes tables and chairs are not sufficient. Therefore the classroom arrangement are very poor, and very very difficult for the teacher to move round to supervise individual work. At times when I set them work I have to stand behind them. Also the tools supplied are not sufficient, for example, the plane for carpentry work -- in a whole school like this, we have only two planes. So during carpentry lessons not all the children get the chance of using the tool. Learning becomes very very slow.

> Textbooks have increased over the past few years since I came to this school. I came to meet only one grammar textbook (in sufficient copies). There were no other textbooks. Then recently we went for oral literature textbooks.

A community leader was asked to describe what he knew about the resource situation in the schools in his community. According to this leader:

> We community leaders don't know how much money the government brings to the schools from time to time, because we are not involved. Some of the district assembly members may know; others don't know. In a few years back when the grassroots participation was strong, parents on their own built workshops for their schools such as the Presbyterian and Methodist. Construction came to a standstill when the district assembly put a stop to the collection of PTA levies. With regard to the way and manner money and other resources are made available to the schools, not even the PTA executives know. All that we may hear of is that the Ghana Education Service office has supplied, for example, ten bundles of roofing

> sheets to Kenyankor community school. So if the government actually wants to involve the people -- the PTAs and community leaders -- so that we also know what is happening, then we must be kept informed. We must know which schools are being given what. Every school should have its own accounts with the headmaster, a community leader and the PTA chairman as signatories. This is because we, the community leaders and the PTAs plus the headmaster, know what the schools need.

A regional budget officer explained that in real terms the total resources flowing to education had been increasing over the years, but whether that increase was sufficient to run education effectively was another matter. In budgetary terms, the officer explained:

> Over the years one can observe that the percentage of the national budget for education has been rising while education is still getting inadequate financing. So it is a question of what should be done. The percentage in the national budget keeps increasing, yet that increase is nowhere adequate for education finance. So in terms of national budget appropriation, resources seem to have increased, but in real terms we are still not getting adequate funding for education. If we look at the actual requirement as against the actual provision, we will then see the financing gap.

A public relations officer also noted that generally educational resources have increased over the years. He said:

> Since the start of the educational reforms, loans have been contracted from foreign governments, and this has increased educational resources, including money, equipment, and so on, to schools. But at the same time I must say that the number of schools have also increased and many children are now in school. Because of that the increased funds have not been adequate. Resources have increased, but the increase in the number of educational users neutralize or nullify this increase. Therefore, not much improvement is actually visible. The rate of increase should be greater than it has been. The reform has made many people aware that children should go to school, and for that reason many schools have been opened. We should also note that our population has been increasing very fast. The fast increase in population means that we should put up many schools. And to feel the impact of increase in funds, the amount allocated to districts or schools should be something like doubled to match the increase in population.

Summary

Headquarters directors agreed that the percentage of the national budget allocated to education had increased over the years rising to 40.7 percent in 1994. Considering the many sectors that must also be allocated funds from the national coffers, the percentage seems large enough. This increase suggests that the central government as the largest contributor of educational resources was living up to its responsibility. The large percentage also implies that educational authorities in the districts and schools should receive adequate resources including money, to carry out their educational assignments.

However, as the responses indicate, resources have not been adequate. District directors expressing different views noted that resource flow to their school jurisdictions had either increased, remained constant or had decreased over the years. Even in cases where resources had increased, directors were not quite comfortable. Some of them were being considerate because they felt what they received was all that they could obtain under the circumstances. Other directors expressed frustrations arising from inadequate resources because they could not carry on the required functions. Even though in terms of government's fund allocations, there had been increase over the years, in real terms, the increase seem to have little impact on performance because of increase in the population of school children. Population increase neutralizes and nullifies such increases.

A major point made by other officials was that financial administration had not been decentralized, and that school administrators were still following the previous system where the district heads submitted annual budget requirements to the regional heads for onward submission to the headquarters. The headquarters would then consider what to approve and what not to approve. The procedure was slowing down administration, and it was difficult to ensure that all levels of government were playing their educational role effectively. It was suggested that educational planners should listen to grievances of the lower level administrators if the job was to be done. An instance was that the government had managed to supply learning tools to the schools. Although generally these tools were seen as inadequate for the schools, they were better than nothing at all. However, due to lack of qualified teachers and workshops to utilize the tools, such tools were stocked in some locations and were being stolen for lack of security personnel. Such personnel used to serve the schools but were withdrawn against the approval of the school authorities. Some headmasters were, however, taking some measures to control the loss of such tools.

Headmasters and teachers noted that stationery was another major problem which was more acute than textbook supply. School authorities perceived that as a major problem because stationery was supplied rather late and in insufficient quantities. This situation slowed down learning in schools. The fact that the government had taken on the responsibility to supply these materials made some parents raise objections if they were asked to buy them. In such a situation, the schools turned to the local bookstores to buy stationery at much higher prices. Respondents therefore suggested the need for the government to make such materials available in the local stores at good prices. There was also a problem of inadequate classroom furniture.

Increasing User Fees

An option to obtain more resources in terms of money was to ask users to pay more for primary and secondary education. The views expressed reflect those of seven directors (headquarters, region and district), five school-based administrators, five teachers, three parents and three other officials. These respondents were asked to express some thoughts on getting more resources for education through increase in user fees. One of the headquarters directors pointed out that the fees at the current level was too low and could be increased but there was an accompanying problem as noted from the following comment:

> I don't see anything wrong with increasing fees, because I don't see how you can pay ¢500 towards your child's education for a whole year knowing very well that the ¢500 cannot buy even two exercise books. Moreover, these books are kept in the schools; the children are not allowed to take them home for studies. In the colonial days we were buying our own books. I have the view that if you've given birth to a child you should be prepared to pay more. However, the government also wants to achieve a universal basic education by a certain date. So if we are going to ask parents to pay more fees, we are going to defeat that objective. So any fee increase should be looked at critically.

Six district directors and two assistant directors expressed various views on the issue of raising user-fees to generate more money. One assistant director representing a regional director, for example, observed that increasing fees will defeat the country's policy of fee-free education because many parents will not be able to afford any increase in fees. The director supported his assertion by noting that:

> Already the economy is not very good for any kind of increase in the country. The moment you increase fees the objective for which you do that will be defeated. At the moment students don't pay too much; only the user fees for books which is nominal. And yet there are many parents in the rural areas who can't pay this. Talk about the junior secondary school examination fees. Some of them can't pay so you find some students not writing the examination. Finally the Ministry has to come in and help to pay the fees for them, including even those in the senior secondary schools. So if you talk of increasing fees you are creating more problems.

Another district director, however, felt that increasing fees was in order because the fees being currently paid were very low even though they were not low for the really poor people. According to the director, however, if the very poor people who should also educate their children were asked to foot an increased bill, it would be a burden for them. He then suggested that user fees should be used to establish a revolving fund that would be used constantly to supply books to the districts. Three district directors expressed views as follows:

> If you imagine that a pupil is asked to pay less than ¢1000, or even ¢2000 for a whole year for books, for tuition, for this, for that, I think it is very cheap. So if the rate is increased to say, ¢5000, I think it is still cheap; but I know that because of political reasons the government will never do that. You imagine that now we have a whole lot of books for our schools because of the revolving fund. The pupils pay textbook user fees. This fee is put in a special account. The government then transfers money from this account to produce more books. So the system is sustaining itself. If the user fee is increased we know that there will be hardship for some people, but looking at the totality of the whole enterprise, it is cheap and could be increased.

> The fee is free in basic education schools. The point is that the government obtains money elsewhere to supply textbooks. There is wear and tear of the textbooks so they have to be replaced. As a result, it was directed that a textbook fee of ¢250 should be paid by each pupil. This fee goes into a revolving fund. This means that when the initial capital to supply the textbooks becomes depleted, there will be money to replace the books. So in actual fact the pupils don't pay tuition fees while the textbooks are also supplied by the government. This revolving fund is meant to replace the textbooks for which the children pay a token fee of ¢250 per child.

> The assembly has got PTA funds. We have also got sports fees from the regional office. The sports fees were increased at the beginning of the academic year. What I did was to lower the PTA amount so that we still charge the same amount. Parents find it difficult to pay fees. I would not like to see school fees increased. Collecting the fees even as they now stand is a problems to us.

According to another district director, the government desires that parents should make some affordable contributions, and that there were guidelines for parents who were in a position to contribute more. The Ministry of Education places restrictions on asking parents to make unapproved contributions. There may be situations when such restrictions can be set aside. An assistant director was quite explicit in his view against increases in school fees. He explained that at the elementary level some headteachers are sometimes compelled by circumstances to pay the fees for children whose parents are unable to do so even at the current fee level which is generally perceived to be low. Therefore, according to him:

> If the fee is increased, I am afraid some of the headteachers will relinquish their post and run away. Some parents as a last resort will withdraw their children. Some headteachers know that when they have admitted a child for a number of months, his fees must be paid at all costs.

A senior administrator in a senior secondary school, however, thought that as far as the senior secondary school was concerned, the fees had been increased and were already high. He observed that these fees did not help much because the books supposed to be supplied free by the government were often not available and not in sufficient quantities. Therefore, parents who could afford and were prepared to do so were already being forced to spend more on books by buying them from the private books stores. The problem, however, was that many of the books were not available on the market for those who were prepared to buy. He explained the fee increase as follows:

> At the moment there is something like that in place. Government provides the textbooks, and the junior and senior secondary school students are supposed to pay user fees. At the senior secondary school it used to be ¢4,500 when the program started. It was later increased to ¢6000. Now what government officials are saying is that since education should be free for all, they don't want to charge too much. But parents who have the ability to pay and are prepared to do so, buy some of the books locally. The problem is that most of the books are not on the market.

The senior official was of the view that for those who were willing to buy, the books must be available at the market for them to buy. The disadvantage, according to this official, was that books supplied to students were supposed to be used only within the limited time they were in school. The time for students to study at school was not adequate, while at the same time the books were not available for use at home. The suggestion then was that the books must be available in the stores so that those who desired to buy could do so for their children to assist in their studies at home.

The directors' comments suggest that even though the fees at the current level are low, they have been deliberately fixed at that level by official policy in order that most parents could afford them. The policy is aimed at making basic education accessible to everyone. Therefore if the fees do not seem to yield adequate income, other avenues for generating more money must be sought rather than getting more money through increased fees.

Heads of schools who are more directly involved with school funds expressed different views about the fee increase. One head of a senior secondary school felt that the day-to-day administration of the schools required that fees are increased from time to time with the government's approval. However, since the government does not want to incur the displeasure of the electorate, it feels reluctant to increase fees even though fee increase becomes expedient from time to time. The head observed:

> I think the whole issue about fee increase is political. The government does not want to lose face with the electorate. Even though they know that this is the right thing to do, they shy away from it. For example, if the government provides certain basic food items to boarding schools at good prices, it will be an advantage. If the government is reluctant to increase school fees, then the main staple foods should be supplied to schools by the government. This is necessary because even with the ¢400 per student per day, some parents genuinely find it difficult to foot the bill. So I think the whole thing is political and we understand it that way . . . The government seems to seek political expediency at the expense of smooth school administration. Even before the ¢400 was approved by the government itself, there was a lot of foot dragging. Then finally the newspapers started bombarding until

> the Ministry, without announcing it to the public, sent us letters to implement the decision. We felt the government should have announced its decision in the mass media that boarding fees had been increased.

Three heads of junior secondary school commented on the fee increase as follows:

> If school fees are increased, it goes to the government coffers, but if the government will allow headteachers, teachers, parents, etc. to levy certain amount of fees to maintain the schools, that will help. But the government does not support the idea that heads should levy to maintain the schools. They feel that the local councils should maintain the schools, but the councils are not in a position to do so. Sometimes the PTA is prepared to levy some money, yet the government does not support that. The government expects PTA to help through individual contributions such as somebody saying, "I can offer 100 bags of cement," or somebody offering 50 roofing sheets. That is what the government wants, but does not support the idea of levying heavily on the children, because not all the parents can afford such levies.
>
> The fee increase is part of the amount of ¢850 being paid. Sports takes the greater part -- ¢600. PTA takes ¢100. Housecrafts take ¢150, apart from the textbook user fee. Fee increase will come by all means because in every year's budget they increase school fees. Formerly it was ¢650.
>
> In fact here we are faced with school fees problems. There are some children who up to this time haven't paid even a *pesewa* towards the government's supply of textbooks. So any increase will be a burden on the parents. Instead of the fee increase, if parents will be encouraged to buy textbooks for their wards they won't see it as a problem because every parent will like his or her ward to progress.

The views of the heads of junior secondary schools suggest different positions with regard to fee increase. While their position supports increases in school fees to facilitate school administration, they also seem concerned about problems that any fee increase might pose to students. The heads, however, acknowledge that the fees as they currently stand are low and that an increase might be a right policy to consider.

Three teachers commented on the fee increase as follows:

> One can suggest fee increase but the government will reject that suggestion because the government wants every student to have fee-free education. Personally I am in favour because the fee of ¢250 being paid now is too small -- ¢250 for what? Some of the students when they are coming to school in the morning, they are given ¢500 for food expenses. How do you pay ¢250 for the year for books? And it is not even one book, but all subjects -- about twelve of them. It's just inadequate, but the fact is that some parents are so poor that they are unable to pay even the ¢250.
>
> Some years back the government said that if parents wanted their own set of books they could buy them from the stores. So if parents can afford they can buy books and stationery from the open market, because even if we get them from the government, strictly speaking every student will be entitled to only two. Yes, if we

> want to be fair. The office counts the school population and if it is, say 500, then they supply 1000; because they have to supply all schools in the district while they have limited supply from the government. So every student will be entitled to two or three books, then a parent can buy the rest from the open market. In view of this if the government increases the user fee, some additional funds will be obtained to supply more books.
>
> When fees are increased it is there that problems will arise for poor parents. The government has been able to analyze these problems, and that is why it has reduced the fees for even the very poor parents to be able to pay; for all children to get basic education. So I don't support increase in school fees.

The main point made by teachers is that school fees could be increased and the proceeds used to establish a revolving textbook fund. The fees as they stand now are too low and therefore some teachers under normal circumstances will support increase. The decision to increase fees, however, is that of the government, but the government is unwilling to do so because of the perceived hardships that such increase may bring on the very poor parents. Indeed even at the current perceived low level, some poor parents find it a burden to pay. It may also be appropriate to expect parents to buy books from the local stores because even if the government is punctual with its supplies, the quantities are such that a student may receive only a few of such supplies. The government's supplies cannot provide enough books for every single student.

A community leader and two parents expressed different views on the fee increase. One of them was of the view that if the government believes that increasing fees would help raise standards, then there was nothing wrong with that, because as she put it "we are after qualitative and quantitative education" implying that educational provisions should not only improve in quality, but also in quantity. When the parent was asked about the poor parents who could not afford a fee increase, she remarked:

> Good! That also comes into play. Some parents may not be able to afford increase in fees; but some may be able to afford. In this case we can take an average figure that is, if we think ¢60 per month, for example, will be fine, then we go with that. We can come to a compromise on some fee to pay so that no parents will be overburdened. At the same time the government will be able to get something substantial to furnish the schools, to remunerate the teachers, and so on.

Another parent felt that considering their economic predicament at moment, parents are not in a position to accept any increase in school fees which the government may impose on them. According to this parent who had four children in various levels of school:

> Expenses on day nursery schools now are as high as what we paid for secondary school in our time. Recently we wanted to enroll a child in a nearby Day Nursery School. To our surprise, when we went there we were told that the government had decided not pay salaries of the teachers there any longer. Therefore parents

> were being called upon to pay the teachers' salaries in that nursery school. The school fees are very high already for parents so that further increase will not be acceptable. The government will jeopardize its policy of universal basic education if it attempts to impose further increases in school fees. Many parents will withdraw their children from school. And that will defeat the policy of free education. Therefore it behoves the government itself to find more money for educational expenses.

According to the community leader:

> The current fees is not the correct amount parents are paying. The government is subsidizing what they are paying now. But we also know that there are poor families. All depends on community involvement and the efficiency of the district assemblies. If all things are put in their rightful places, everything will improve for the better. Increasing fees is not the answer because for some people, even what they will eat for breakfast is a problem. In the urban towns parents who are working as government employees may be well off. But in the small farming communities, except in the harvest season, they are normally very poor. During the peak farming season, you will not find anybody in the classrooms in the poor farming communities if you visit there. All of them would have gone to the farm.

A concern raised was that increasing fees to generate more educational funds was not the answer, and that one strategy was the people's willingness to offer free communal labour for the schools which they would also not offer willingly. In such a situation the community leader noted:

> All depends on the district assembly making laws that will be binding on everyone: that in this town or village, on this day, at this time, all citizens are going to do this for that school. If the assembly is strong in enforcing its laws all citizens will abide by them. If a citizen defies the law and is grabbed, of course the penalty should be there for him or her.

Two other officials, a regional budget officer and a public relations officer expressed views against further increase in fees. The budget officer observed that the multiplicity of fees currently being paid by parents in the elementary schools already implied an increase in user fees. The multiplicity of fees being charged, according to the budget officer, was a problem. He suggested that the several fees should be harmonized. He noted that while pupils paid three cedis (¢3.00) formerly, some schools are now paying ¢4000 a term and that is a massive increase but that there is a need to monitor the use of such funds so that the real impact is felt in the quality of education. With regard to second cycle schools, however, the budget officer did not think any further fee increase was advisable. He remarked:

> I don't think raising fees in the second cycle schools is feasible, because we are really having problems with the few people in the universities. The central government should fund education as a right for citizens of this country up to the

> basic level with the assistance of the local governments. Adequate funding for education up to the basic level should be found. Then at the second and tertiary levels parents should be able to organize to pay for their children to receive education at those levels.

The public relations officer observed that:

> The income levels of many people are very low. So if you begin to raise school fees or begin to ask them to pay so much money, you will end up driving many children out of school. Many parents will not hesitate to withdraw their children from the schools because they just can't afford. Therefore the government has to subsidize in some way to enable the poor ones to send their children to school.

Summary

Most respondents, including directors, headmasters, teachers, and other officials conceded that the user fees as they currently stand in relation to educational services being provided appear to be too low. At the same time, it was observed that this perceived low user fee was still high for poor parents. These views suggest that while fee increases may be a necessary step, it may work against the interests of some poor parents. Given the precarious economic situation of the country and of many individual users of educational services, such increases may not be advisable. Many respondents therefore spoke against any such increase. Yet a few respondents thought that some increase might be advisable. According to some headmasters, some parents were unable to pay for certain important services such as examination registration fees. Increasing user fees would therefore defeat the objective of providing basic education for all. The government's policy was to ask parents to contribute only in a way, and not to actually pay for education. Increasing fees was a prerogative of the government. It was, however, suggested that even if the government believed in such increases, it was unwilling to do so for political expediency. Instead of an official increase, the government was in favour of individuals offering to help through voluntary donations of money and materials.

Some headmasters felt that user fees could, however, be maintained and the proceeds used to establish a revolving fund that would be self-supporting in the provision of textbooks and other learning materials. There were guidelines for parents who were in a position to pay more. The government's supplies have often not been enough to enable individual students to have enough learning materials. Parents who could afford tried to buy books for their children from the local book stores. However, the books were virtually not available in the stores. Fees did not apply to textbooks only. There were several others such as PTA, housecraft, and sports fees. These together made the fees quite high for many parents. Overall, respondents suggested that increasing fees is not a viable option to generate more resources for schools. That option would compel many parents to withdraw their children from school.

District Endowment Fund

In the interviews regarding the options open to educational administrators to get access to more resources, a number of interviewees referred to the establishment of a District "Endowment" or "Education" Fund in the school districts. Two directors, two school heads and a teacher believed that establishing such a Fund for the districts was a viable option. One headquarters director cautioned that while the establishment of a district endowment fund is a laudable proposition, it should not be tied to the school child. He suggested that if, for example, there was communal work to be done in a village for a school, it should be binding on all citizens to participate whether or not they had children in the school. Such obligation should spread over the entire adult population in a school's community. In that situation even if an adult had ten children in a school, his or her input should be the communal labour, and such input should be the same as another person who had only one child. The director pointed out that if the Fund was tied to the number of children a citizen had, then the rich businessman who did not have any child or whose children had completed school would not have to contribute anything and the polygamous husband would pay too much. Hence the director suggested that the system could operate in the entire education system as follows:

> Our view is that even though it is the parent who brought the child into the world, the child is the property of the state. Thus if the child becomes a truant he becomes a liability on the whole community. Therefore if a parent is genuinely incapable of providing for the child's education, the entire society should bear that responsibility. Societal responsibility for the child's education should pertain to basic education. Then beyond basic education level parents may be asked to share a little. For example, in the secondary schools we are encouraging day attendance. If a parent wants his or her child to benefit from boarding facilities, then he or she must be prepared to pay the boarding fees. At the tertiary level, the government has introduced a loan scheme so that students are actually paying for their education. Of course government is paying a greater part of the interest on the loans. A few students, based on the courses they are offering which the country feels are of major importance, are also awarded scholarships to pay for their education. But at the basic education level, it is not in our interest and is unconstitutional to put impediments in the way of parents to get their children to school.

Another headquarters director explained that sometimes when district directors were in need of money to undertake some building projects and similar expenses, they informed the assemblies for assistance. In order to meet such requests from the directors to run their districts, the assemblies impose levies on the citizens in accordance with their laws. The money accruing from such levies is used to establish an "Education Fund." The director said, however, that the Ministry for Education was not happy about such levy imposition. Yet, the Ministry was unable to stop the assemblies from imposing such levies since they had a responsibility towards education and must find a means of generating money. According to the director, foreign donors were not happy about such levies since it forced children whose parents could not pay the levy to drop out of school. Dropping out of school defeated the goal of foreign donors to help make education accessible to all children. This observation suggests that while the idea of establishing an education or endowment fund was laudable, it was not a matter of simply asking citizens to pay some levies into the Fund.

A district director observed that some assemblies liaised with the schools to establish a district educational fund so that each school could receive some assistance. The fund was supposed to be utilized to help all schools that made contributions. However, according to the director, some headmasters observed that when they contributed money into the district fund, their school did not benefit because they did not receive any help from it. Therefore when contributions meant for the fund came to the schools the headmasters used them to develop their own schools. The district assemblies did not, however, approve of such practices.

One headmaster supported the idea of establishing such a fund and commented as follows:

> I would advocate that there should be an education fund into which all institutions which derive manpower from education should contribute. Each member of the working class may be asked to contribute say ¢100 towards education. Then those firms and corporations which are benefiting from the educated personnel should be taxed in a way to establish the central fund. Apart from the government providing money from the consolidated fund there should also be a central fund into which we should all contribute. We should face the realities of life when it comes to the funding of education.

The point made by the respondents who referred to the establishment of an endowment fund is that in order to establish successfully such a fund, it should not be a burden on poor parents only but also on the working class and the business establishments that utilize skilled labour. All schools should be seen to benefit from the fund.

Summary

Respondents agreed that an Education Fund established for each school district was laudable. It was pointed out that such a Fund should, however, operate under certain conditions. The resource pool for the Fund should not be tied to the school child. If communal labour was to be undertaken to raise funds, then all citizens must be involved whether they had children in school or not, and disregarding how many children a citizen might have in school. The Fund should be a concern at the basic education level to help achieve the fee-free compulsory education at that level. At the secondary and tertiary levels, users should be prepared to pay the difference of whatever the central government would be able to provide. The imposition of levies by the district assemblies to mobilize funds should not be seen as a viable option. That option would impose an extra burden on parents and could lead to drop-outs. One option is to request all beneficiaries of education to contribute some stipulated amount of money into the Fund on regular basis. All schools should benefit from such funds since all schools are expected to be involved, directly or indirectly, in the mobilization of such resources.

Loan Scheme

The establishment of a loan scheme policy under which those who would opt for it could obtain funds to support their wards' secondary education, particularly at the senior secondary school level, was raised in the interview. Many respondents -- directors, headmasters, teachers, parents, community leaders and other officials including budget officers -- were asked to comment on the viability of such an option.

One headquarters director observed that the loan scheme was started with the universities. It was later extended to all tertiary institutions such as the polytechnics. The director was of the view that at the moment the fees being paid by parents at the senior secondary school level did not seem as high as to pose a problem for parents to join the loan scheme. Therefore, according to him, it would be a bit of a problem for the government if secondary school students were also allowed to receive loans. One problem noted was that a student's loan attracted an interest of about 27 percent out of which the student recipient paid only about three percent. The bulk of the interest was therefore being paid by the government which was posing a big problem.

Three headmasters commented on the issue as follows:

> I think it is going to aggravate the situation because from the senior secondary school, the child passes out to post-secondary education. That means further expenditure. If he will be going to the university and he takes a loan now, when is he going to finish paying this secondary school loan? So up to the secondary level, parents should be able to bear the whole cost. Moreover, most parents are able to foot the bill. If this scheme is introduced, parents will all go in for the loan, but they won't pay back.

> Introducing a loan scheme is feasible. From the directives of the government the payment of fees are being liberalized. We don't demand that all fees are paid in the first term but to be paid by installments. But even with this procedure some parents

> default in payment. Many parents have financial problems so if the government can ask them to go in for a loan and say, as a farmer you pay gradually, it is a sound policy. It is right to extend what is done at the higher institutions to the grassroots, because the grassroot's son is more important.
>
> A loan scheme will be very good only for those who are working -- those who are earning something at the end of every month. But for farmers, for example, sometimes the weather conditions in a particular year may fail them, and so they won't get money to pay back and that will be a burden on government expenditure.

Therefore, while one headmaster thought that a loan scheme at the secondary level was feasible since it would help some parents who are experiencing financial hardships, two headmasters stood against the idea. These two headmasters thought a loan scheme would aggravate the situation and would be a burden on government expenditure. An important observation was that if such a scheme was introduced as a national policy, all parents would go in for it but would not pay back.

One teacher was emphatic in his view against the establishment of such a scheme. The teacher pointed out:

> Loan scheme for secondary education? No! As for the university there is no problem. The big question is: how many of the children in senior secondary schools are going to obtain good results so as be able to further their education at the university level? If they are given the loans and they are not able to obtain the required grades to enter the university, they become drop-outs -- in a way. In that case they would go in for their own private jobs; how then are they going to pay these loans? But so far as they are in the university the government is certain that they will come out as well-qualified people who will be able to pay the loans.

A parent whose view was similar to that of the teacher noted above did not think such a loan scheme should be encouraged. According to the parent, the certainty that a senior secondary school student will make the grade and get a job is not there. The parent asked, "If you give my ward a loan, and he doesn't complete his school but drops out, or completes school unsuccessfully, do you mean I should repay the loan or the child who is not working?" A community leader, however, supported the scheme under some conditions. The leader observed:

> I like the loan scheme proposal because it is practised in some advanced countries. This is because if you are in a junior secondary school, for example, the government will only help you to pay your fees plus some other petty expenses. At the end of your education you will go and work. Your loan may not be up to say, ¢100,000, so you will repay that loan while working. The loan should, however, depend on a child's stage in education. In the senior secondary school, for example, as soon as a child completes, he is going to do national service. So if possible, some semi-national service should be introduced at the junior secondary school level. Even where junior secondary school products will have to continue

> their education, there are some waiting months in-between. They can do some work during this period to support the government.

A public relations officer who also supported the loan scheme idea explained:

> According to our constitution, basic education is the right of every Ghanaian child. Hence the government should provide basic education to every child as a right, not as a privilege. It is a privilege for tertiary institutions. I feel that at the basic level, education must be somewhat free, or the amount parents have to pay should be minimal. So if you ask senior secondary school students to go in for loans to enable them finance their education, I think it is a bright idea. Right now it is the parents who are wholly paying the fees of their wards in the senior secondary school. So if the government is willing to introduce a new policy whereby parents are given loans to finance education at the secondary level to be paid later on, I think it is worthwhile.

Summary

Respondents made arguments both in support as well as against the proposal to introduce a student loan scheme at the secondary level. Among the views supporting the loan scheme were that (1) it is a relief for parents who are at the moment finding it difficult to pay for their children's secondary education; (2) it might be good for salaried workers who may be sure of regular income, but not for farmers, for example, whose income depends on the vagaries of the weather; (3) it is practised in some advanced countries and we might as well copy that practice; (4) education at the secondary level is a constitutional right, not a privilege, and so the government should do everything possible to provide that. Respondents who expressed views against the loan idea noted that (1) it would be a problem for the government because a student's loan attracted an interest of about 27 percent out of which the recipient paid only about three percent; (2) it would aggravate the situation because students who later entered the university and would need a loan there would already be owing; (3) parents would rush for loans some of whom might not pay back; (4) most parents are already able to foot the secondary education bill; (5) if children become drop-outs or do not complete their school successfully, paying back the loan would be a difficult and uncertain task.

Accountability

Accountability is an issue that has a strong impact on the use of resources (personnel, money, buildings, materials, textbooks and equipment, use of teachers' and students' time) made available for educational programs. Actual increase in resources is a major concern. However, making responsible use of the available resources ensures maximum educational benefits. The study examined the extent of accountability in the educational system, for example, how funds were being used in the schools. Towards that end, respondents were asked to comment on the level of accountability on the part of educational authorities.

A regional director commented on school heads' handling of school funds. According to the director, a policy was in operation under which heads did not handle some funds such as those derived from PTA contributions. The director explained the situation as follows:

> The PTAs have their chairman, secretary, treasurer, and financial secretary. Therefore when any money is collected it goes to the PTA fund which is administered by an executive committee. It has nothing to do with the school. The headteacher does not have a hand in it. If the head needs funds for repairs he has to apply to the committee who would discuss the expenditure and release funds. The reason is that if they channel the collection through the school the headteacher tends to turn out those children who haven't paid their PTA fees to the school. But we don't want that sort of thing. Once they have paid their school fees it's OK for them. The fund is controlled by the PTA so we are saying that the PTA should collect their money directly from the parents. The heads, however, feel that it is much easier collecting through the schools. Money for a specific purpose is released to the headteacher who will have to account to the PTA after expenses.

Two district directors noted:

> So far as I am concerned, when funds come to us we see to it that they are put to effective use. But I can say that in certain communities -- not all communities -- when PAMSCAD [Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment] money came directly to them, those who are administering the funds sometimes failed to get things through; and that's why the whole program has not been completed yet. The PAMSCAD operates outside the Ghana Education Service and is controlled by either the district assembly or through mobilization committees.
>
> What we have to consider is how much money we are actually given. Consider how much we have been given then you can talk in terms of efficiency. If the money comes in piecemeal or a very small amount is allocated to you, then certain aspects of education may not be catered for. So it depends on what you are looking for.

Three headmasters commented on the use of school funds as follows:

> Most of our funds are normally channelled through the district office. We have observed that expenditure in the school is becoming higher than the income. This is how I see it. The government has to bring in more money, but whatever comes into our hands is used judiciously.
>
> In this school whatever money we receive we spend it wisely, because whatever expenses we make have to go on record subject to auditing. When auditors come to find that money is not being used wisely we are given some advice to follow. But in this school, nothing of that nature has happened. Whenever auditors audit our accounts they find that every money has been used for the intended purpose.

> As a head I believe that the little money we get, we use it wisely. We have a whole lot of things to do. Looking round you see that the buildings are old and need some renovation. In most cases we don't get enough funds to do what we want to do. We use the little to do at least part of what we have to do, but in actual fact we don't do much. What we are able to do is just insignificant. In most cases we have to cover only the very major ones -- our priorities.

One headmaster, however, referred to instances of embezzlement in other schools and noted some headmasters had not paid the collected textbook fees to the government chest as required by law and so an embargo had been placed on their salaries. On this situation the headmaster suggested that as soon as the fees were collected what was due to the government must be paid out, then what belongs to the school must be kept and used wisely in the interest of the school. The head acknowledged that some heads embezzled funds out of genuine economic hardships and noted that often heads borrowed money from the fees collected with the intention of paying back later which they were unable to do by the end of the financial year. The head commented:

> That is human nature; borrowing is likely to occur, but if you do that, then you must see to it that that money is refunded. If you have money in your custody and you are in trouble, you can fall on it, but you must see to it that it is refunded and paid to the appropriate quarters at the appropriate time.

A teacher explaining the situation in his school said, “money is not wasted, but the amount of money obtained is not what we actually need.”
A PRO also noted:

> In this district, as far as I know, we have not come across any waste of funds as such. Funds are released to the heads of departments and the district assemblies. They usually supervise school projects and they have to see to it that these things are well done. If there has been any misuse of funds, well that has not come to my notice.

The general notion about monetary accountability is that no educational institution obtains all what it requires to run its educational programs to the satisfaction of all its stakeholders. Whatever is received is used responsibly and in the interest of the schools

Summary

A point made particularly by district directors and headmasters was that resources, particularly money, were never adequate, but whatever funds were received were judiciously used in most cases. All expenditures were subject to auditing, and auditors generally made favourable reports on educational spending. In cases of unacceptable expenses, advice was given to those concerned. Money was channelled through the district offices to the schools in piecemeal. Therefore not much was actually accomplished for the schools, and only the major items of expenditure received attention. Some funds allocated to organizations outside the school, e.g. PAMSCAD [Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment] for school projects were not well-utilized. Some heads of schools were also observed to unintentionally embezzle educational funds as a result of economic hardships. Funds generated from PTAs were not handled by school heads. Such funds were administered by a PTA executive who released funds for school expenses as may be requested by the head.

Cost-Effectiveness

One major concern in educational expenditure is related to how much resources, particularly money, are able to achieve in terms of long- and short-term educational services -- tangible and intangible educational benefits produced by the money allocated from various sources. Increasing resources may not always imply more money. A number of respondents assumed to possess some expertise on education's cost-effectiveness were asked to comment on the issue. These respondents included three directors, three school heads, a budget officer, and a university administrator. One national headquarters director recounted:

> On the question of cost-effectiveness, yes, but we have a little problem with supervision in the schools regarding effective teaching and learning, especially in the primary and the junior secondary schools. In the seventies things were very bad in this country; the economic situation went down; so many teachers while teaching were doing some other jobs, and so on. And it appears this attitude hasn't changed very much. Even though the government has put in a lot of books, and brought in more trained teachers, it looks as if actual learning and achievement, particularly in the primary schools, are not up to the level we expect. And we think this is mainly due to ineffective teaching and ineffective monitoring and supervision especially at the basic education level. The government is therefore placing more emphasis on the next stage of the reform program. The World Bank Primary Project is being used as a pilot program. About 2000 schools have been selected for assistance. Within these schools we are going to monitor them carefully during this period to see how supervision goes on there. More especially we think if the headteachers are given sufficient authority for supervision -- powers to supervise their teachers -- we will achieve a lot. After all many of the private schools in the system don't have good trained teachers, but because of effective supervision by the proprietors and by the headteachers, they achieve quite high learning in their schools.

A senior education officer expressed similar views on the loopholes in school supervision and pointed out:

> I will say that investment returns in education are not quite adequate. At least some returns have been achieved, but are not adequate. It appears there is a lot of

> mismanagement here and there. One of the problems has been lack of supervision and co-ordination which must be seriously addressed.

One headmaster attributed lack of cost-effectiveness to the absence of good planning in the entire system and felt that money was going down the drain. He noted, "Planning has not been so good, and when something has not been properly planned, you can't expect much from it. Because of that it is costing us 200 percent of what we should normally spend." A senior university administrator, however, explained the benefits derived from education with the following remarks:

> Education is a costly venture. The benefits of education are not subject to cost-effectiveness or cost benefit analysis because the benefit of education is very wide. It is difficult to quantify. If you talk in terms of direct benefits which is limited to life-time earnings of the educated individual, then you may be inclined to think that education has not been cost-effective or that we are not getting as much from education as we put into it. But if you talk of benefits in general such as making people well-informed about their duties as citizens, education as helping people to be knowledgeable about the world around them, etc. which are social benefits of education, and which cannot be quantified, then we can say that education is really cost-effective. We may not be able to quantify a lot of benefits derived from education, and so we sometimes think education has been a waste, because what we put into education is not being realized. But if we can quantify the social benefits of education, and put them into monetary terms, then we can say that education's benefits will outweigh its cost.

The officer did not think there was wastage in education in the sense of producing people who are probably useless and from whom no benefits are derived in the light of education they have received. According to him, there were a lot of unemployable youths in the country, people who had been to school and had passed out with some qualifications but were at a loss when asked what they could do. A general view was that if education continued to produce unemployable youths in the country then the country was not benefiting from education as much as it should. Even though this was true, there were social benefits of education as well to consider. He conceded, however, that at least the direct quantifiable economic benefits of education must also be realized. He suggested:

> We shall be able to reap the economic benefits of education to the extent that avenues are made to enable the youth to obtain employment when they leave school. We often talk of the need for training and establishing training institutes such as Opportunities Industrialization Centre (OIC) where skills will be provided the youth so that when they complete this type of training they will be more employable. At least they will be able to use their hands to do something if they cannot continue at a higher level of schooling. But judging from the age of the pupils, they are really too young to be able to manage their own business. Also in the three-year period of junior secondary school, we don't expect that they will turn into full-fledged carpenters, masons, etc. In fact we all know that they only get

> predisposed to the program so that after leaving this level, if they don't continue to learn, then they have not achieved much.

The expectation then, according to the officer, was that after junior secondary school students should enter apprenticeship programs. It was assumed that these students would continue to learn some apprenticeship trades. There was, however, no established institutions to which they could enter after completing junior secondary school so far. There is no smooth transition. Therefore, the officer suggested that in addition to apprenticeship programs, the nation should establish well-equipped training institutes to provide formal apprenticeship programs to help the existing master craftsmen and women.

A regional budget officer thought that the issue of education's cost-effectiveness could be addressed by looking at one major area: personnel management. He explained the situation as follows:

> Personally I have not been happy about the placement of human resources in education in the district and regional offices. When you go there you see a lot of wastage. I started my career at a regional education office where we had very few people. As a matter of fact in 1975 when I was there we had about four assistant directors running the whole educational system in the region. Now there are about 17 assistant directors doing about the same work formerly done by four officers. This is one major source of wastage in the system, so personnel management waste should be addressed. Then consider the placement of teachers. For human relations reasons we tend to have lop-sided placement where the most qualified teachers are posted to the urban centres with many of them not doing much. Then a few low-calibre teachers are placed in the rural areas. In the long run it affects the efficient financing of education and the quality of education we are given. Therefore education has not been cost-effective.

On the issue of personnel management, a concern of some policy makers was the issue of unemployment as one side-effect of addressing the problem of cost-effectiveness. The achievement of real efficiency in personnel management would mean ensuring that there was real work for those who were employed, particularly in government offices in the district, regional and headquarters. This would mean laying off many of the workers who were under-employed, which would in turn cause unemployment which was already perceived as being high in the country. On the question of unemployment, the budget officer commented as follows:

> I don't think it's really a question of unemployment. The people in the offices can go back and teach in the classrooms. We had a system in this country where if a teacher got promoted to a higher rank, he must move from the classroom to the office. That is a bad policy we are running and should be examined. When a teacher starts a career as an initial Certificate 'A' teacher, he is promoted to the rank of assistant superintendent, superintendent, senior superintendent and so on. As soon as the teacher reaches the principal superintendent rank, then somebody somewhere must find a place for him in the office, even if there is really no work

> for him in the office. From the principal superintendent rank, a teacher moves out of the classroom. And now that we are having them [principal superintendents] in tens of thousands you can see the effect. So I am saying that the education system should look at the manpower structure. Up to date there are no two district education offices that have the same organizational structure operating. Every district is run the way the district director thinks good. I think this is an issue to be addressed centrally. We don't have any common structure, we don't have job descriptions, and we don't have job schedules. It is the way a director thinks that the office is run and I think it is a bad system.

An officer referred to long term returns from education and commented that:

> Talking objectively I am sure the returns are OK. In relation to the amount of investment we are making in education we are coming up with greater percentage of literates in the population, and this is a good return. In the long run I can see much higher returns in education when the basic structures are doing well. But in the situation where we appear to be focusing on the universities and on the second cycle institutions the returns to the entire economy is a little low. But if we turn round, set our priorities right and devote adequate funds for the basic level the returns will be adequate.

One officer referred to measures that could be taken to ensure that cost of education are reasonable and are under control. The officer observed that in Ghana there is a discrepancy between theory and practice, for example, the theory that in the second cycle school, board of governors should take charge of educational funding. The policy makes it unequivocal that the board of governors is responsible for funding. Yet in actual practice it is the school head who holds the responsibility, an anomaly that must be corrected. If a board is managing finances, then all things being equal it will be done cost-effectively. If, however, financing is left in the hands of an individual, then human nature being what it is, there will be some lapses. The officer concluded, "I believe we should reinforce that policy: Board of Governors should take control of school finances even though they may not do this on day-to-day basis. If that is done one major bottleneck will be removed."

Summary

The point made by the respondents, particularly headmasters, was that the entire educational system was beset with mismanagement and lack of effective planning and monitoring. A considerable percentage of the money allocated to education goes down the drain. Educational ventures are costing 200 percent of what should normally be spent on them. There is a discrepancy between theory and practice. For example, the board of governors in secondary schools is supposed to be responsible for school expenditures, but in practice only headmasters shoulder that responsibility. Heads of schools have also not been effective in monitoring school programs and in instructional supervision especially at the basic education level. They need to be empowered to do that. People supposed to be full-time employed teachers are also engaged in other jobs at the same time. Therefore, teaching has not been effective and the system is turning out unemployable youth. There are no institutionalized apprenticeship training programs to provide further training to junior secondary school graduates. The focus seems to be on the universities and senior secondary schools, an indication that priorities may not have been set right in the system.

Other officials observed that there is also a wastage in personnel management. There are a lot more workers in the district, regional and headquarters offices than are actually required. Thus many of the staff supposed to be full-time employees are actually under-employed. In the schools qualified teachers are posted to the urban centres with many of them not doing much teaching, while seemingly low-calibre teachers are posted to the rural schools. Teachers promoted to higher ranks such as principal superintendents and assistant directors are moved from the classrooms to the offices where there is not much work for them to do. There is no common structure in the way district education offices are run. Every district office is organized and administered in the way the district director thinks fit. Consequently, even though considerable resources were being pumped into education, teaching has not been effective and the learning outcomes have been much less than expected. Although educational returns have been low, social benefits such as creating well-informed citizenry and greater percentage of literate population have been derived. Education is a costly venture difficult to quantify in terms of the returns derived from it.

Weaknesses in Financial Practices

The research sought to determine the system's quality of financial practices perceived as a function of government financial policies, for example, the structures put in place to decide on and monitor the use of funds by local heads of department. One national headquarters director, two district directors, a senior officer in a secondary school, and a regional budget officer referred to a number of bottlenecks in the financial administration of the entire educational system. A national headquarters director pointed out that when the weakness of the educational system is raised as a topic, the issues involved are sometimes a little exaggerated. The director noted that a major weakness in the system since the reforms started was with the budget system -- budgeting of resources for education. He stated, however, that the budget system has improved very well. According to him:

> The district offices and some educational institutions didn't have well-qualified personnel to look after their finances. In the eighties a number of school bursars, now called accountants in the secondary schools and teacher training colleges,

> embezzled funds. Some of them misapplied funds meant for feeding students, sports, and maintenance by using the money for other purposes. And by doing so some of the money went into private pockets. A committee set up to investigate these allegations found some of the heads and accountants guilty of embezzlement. Most of these developments were due to weak monitoring and supervision which we have strengthened and continue to strengthen. It is difficult to eliminate these things entirely but we are trying to minimize it as much as we can.

A district director was of the opinion that:

> The weaknesses have been that finances have not been sufficient; they are meager. There is a need to give good training to teachers; not the formal training alone, but especially in-service training to make them aware of changes that are going on. Some of the teachers are so static that if you don't bring them up, they will get rusted in the classroom.

A senior officer in a senior secondary school dwelt at length on financial practices in the schools. The officer observed that:

> There is a lot to be said about finances in the school. First, the inflow of finances and then their use. In the first place the central government has a policy to send some amount of money to run the school. This has not been coming at the right time, and at times it is even slashed to a percentage which makes it very difficult to operate with. The money is supposed to be provided quarterly, but at times in about half a year or even in a whole year none of the funds would be forthcoming. This is a situation we deplore, and we actually write to remind of the government of its responsibilities. . . The bursar's office is supposed to collect fees, but then we feel that the bursar does not have the machinery to collect fees. So we make it the responsibility of the staff to do so. At times we set up a task force to collect fees. We warn the students to pay by mid-term so that if by that time they haven't paid, we go to force them to pay by turning them out of the classrooms. In spite of all that we are very surprised that some students still don't pay. We send out bills to parents at the end of the term, but then there are also instances where fees are given to students and they put them in their pockets. And it's all because they have seen that our head is lenient in a way.

There appear to be more effective methods of collecting fees but there are problems associated with such methods. According to the officer:

> The only effective means which we can use to collect fees is (1) admission -- we can demand that a full term's fees is paid before we admit a student, but at times some of the parents plead so much that we have to admit their wards after they've been able to pay only half of the fees. Then we allow them in -- they may be civil servants, they may be people we know very well and cannot doubt their integrity, but some of these people actually default. (2) When it comes to examination time any student who has not paid is not allowed to write the exam and that should compel the student to find a means of paying. Some students would rather prefer not writing the exam than paying their fees. So we use all methods and approaches to collect fees but it is still a very big problem.

On the use of school funds, the officer explained that when students have paid their fees, and the central government has also provided its share of the funds, they might be used to provide stationery, textbooks, and whatever students require to learn. This is, however, not as straightforward as it might seem because certain situations arise sometimes where school authorities are compelled to misapply funds. This misapplication refers to a situation where funds allocated for a specific purpose is diverted to another pressing need. He gave the following examples of fund misapplication:

> We have two vehicles in the school and their fueling and maintenance is a problem. At times the maintenance cost is far in excess of the funds which the government has provided. So we have to find a means of providing extra funds, and this should come from the payment of fees. Recently we suffered a disaster from rainstorm -- the whole roof of our workshop was ripped off. This is something that required immediate attention and we had to find funds somewhere to repair the damage. Apart from that there are times when teachers feel that "We have worked for a whole term, and we must have some entertainment." The government does not provide funds for this sort of thing. We have to find a way of satisfying teachers when they make a demand for a get-together. Funds have to be raised. Students should also have some entertainment. The government is supposed to provide the funds, but it is grossly inadequate.

On the payment of students' fees which is a major source of funds, the officer referred to the fear that if the school authorities should insist on fee payment as students enroll at the beginning of the term, they would lose a lot of students. The concern is not that such students would enter other institutions, but they would simply drop out. School authorities therefore attempt to balance issues with the understanding that there are two evils to a problem, for example, (i) student's dropping out of school, and (ii) accepting students' non-payment of fees and permitting them to stay in school, which is seen as the lesser evil. The officer explained that since they prefer to see a lot of students benefit from education, they must be prepared to allow for those who, through no fault of theirs, cannot afford to pay. Under these circumstances, the officer said "a lot of students come in just because we want to give them education. And we always find that students who are good and are coping academically are very poor students who cannot afford."

According to another district assistant director, a major weakness in the system is the very large percentage of government's funds that go into the payment of salaries of educational personnel rather than educational infrastructure. The government as the largest employer has been compelled to provide employment to many people resulting in huge salary expenses. The director observed:

> The employment burden has been too heavy for the government, for example, teachers and support staff. Look at the salaries of all teachers being paid by the government and other forms of expenditure. What I have learned from other

> countries is that they have private enterprises coming in to help, but in Ghana private enterprises rarely fund education of their employees. They only depend on the government to train people and they go in just to employ them. We expect these enterprises to initiate action by taking on people who are promising in their establishment, giving them higher education and bringing them back to continue with their work. A trained person may be more committed to the establishment. Also individuals in the community who have the means are not prepared to help. Generally the bulk of the people live below the poverty line. Only a few of them live above the poverty line, but these few are not patriotic enough.

The director observed, however, that even when some individuals require a piece of land to establish a school, some people try to thwart their efforts. To address this problem, the director suggested that public education should be mounted so that individuals and organizations who have the means can come in to help. He noted that organizations like churches could help but are not doing so. He argued:

> In our churches you find educated people reading bible lessons as a result of the education they have received; what are the churches doing to help provide more education? At the moment we have Methodist schools and others. They organize harvest, and they invite even people who are not members of their church to donate money. When the churches get their money do they think of the schools? If you find anything being done in the schools, then it is being done by the PTA, and yet the schools bear the names of their respective churches.

A regional budget officer was of the view that a major weakness in the system was that in spite of all previous attempts at decentralization, administration was still highly centralized. According to him:

> In any system where financial decision is made at the headquarters and is not very close to the level of expenditure itself we tend to have wastage along the line. The farther the financial decision is removed from the level of implementation, the higher the wastage. It should be possible for local communities to take major decisions on education financing. If this is done the question about accessibility, administrative and quality of education will all be addressed.

The budget officer explained that actual decentralization was a question of fiscal decentralization. He noted that the government was still looking for a way out of moving from a centralized financial administration to a decentralized type, not only in education, but across the board. This is a major problem the country was facing which some consultants had been appointed to look into. The officer was optimistic that the problem of fiscal decentralization could be solved if it was tackled with some seriousness and commitment. He reasoned:

> We used a two-year program to implement the decentralization program by first preparing a composite budget. When we are implementing the composite budget we look at the decrees and regulations on finance and disbursement in the country. Because our financial administration is based on the decree of 1979, and the

> financial administration regulations LI 1234 all of which are centralized, we are operating a highly centralized system. There is a need for us to look at these two basic documents and decentralize financing. As it is there are no guidelines as to how to treat decentralized financing in this country.

The budget officer was asked to explain what, in his view were the barriers to fiscal decentralization. He explained the system with the following comments:

> I have worked on the decentralization for close to ten years. It has been lack of committed leaders who understand the system well and push it to its implementation. The government has accepted it as a policy, yes; but there are so many things left to be done. We are still operating a centralized system. Sector ministries have been taking decisions. So one major area that has not been examined yet and people are not seeing is that we should be able to make it impossible for the centre to make decisions which they are now making, but shouldn't be making. And that is a question of ministerial restructuring. . . remove all implementation activities from the centre and give them to the districts. The Ministry of Health is doing it, Education is doing it, but it is not being done procedurally, and that is the problem. Everybody is looking at it from his own point of view. As a nation, I don't think we have come to a situation where we have a consensus on what we want decentralization to do for us. Everybody is talking about it, but we need a central redefinition of what we need.

The notion was that there was an attempt to enter a new decentralized system, an administrative area that would make all the difference, and the Bill to that effect was before Parliament. He felt that "when we have a decentralized system with the appropriate sanctions for not performing, when we are able to redefine our financial administration, then we will be well on our way into it. But I can see that in two or three years to come we will still be grappling with this problem."

Summary

Respondents pointed to the fact that the educational system is grappling with a number of weaknesses, although in some circles these problems seem to be exaggerated to some extent. The budget system is beset with inefficiencies and one major weakness is that the system is still highly centralized fiscally. District directors noted that financial decisions are largely made at the headquarters for local management, and for that reason estimated budgets are slashed. Finances for the districts and schools are therefore often meager compelling local authorities to misapply funds. Embezzlement is also a problem owing to weak supervision and monitoring. School fees form a major source of funds for the schools, but fee payment is a problem for school authorities. Salaries of educational employees take a much larger percentage of the educational funds leaving only a small percentage to take care of educational infrastructure. Churches, individuals and groups of people who have the means to assist are quite unprepared to do so, and in cases where they are prepared to assist, they are faced with the problem such as sabotage from some other citizens. A few headmasters pointed out that some heads of department misapply funds quite often out of necessity. Such misapplication becomes necessary in order to deal with some pressing institutional matters such as fuelling a school vehicle, repairing a damaged school building or providing some sort of entertainment to staff and students at the end of the school year.

Welfare Services

An important aspect of educational resources relate to the provision of resources which are catered for through extra-governmental channels to facilitate the day-to-day school programs. These are resources required by staff as well as students. For students these resources include the provision of the means of transport to convey students to and from school, canteen to provide meals to students particularly at lunch time, medical services to provide first aid to students who require them, equipment for sports and games, costumes for dramatic activities, etc. For teachers the resources include allowances for transport, medical expenses, and responsibility allowances and incentives based on special duties and for working in difficult stations. It also includes teachers' conditions of service. Respondents were asked to comment on the adequacy and appropriateness of these resources, the means of providing them and how best these services should be provided. Respondents generally dwelt on the facilities provided for students. Two headquarters directors, four district directors, four headteachers, three teachers and three parents commented on these resources.

One headquarters director, for example, pointed out that all workers in the public sector, including those in the Ghana Education Service (GES), are paid transport allowances. There is also ¢25,000 a year for medical expenses per person. If a teacher attends a hospital and presents medical bills, the government reimburses this amount. However, if the total bill exceeds the stipulated amount, then the teacher has to bear the difference. The director explained the provision of facilities regarding students' health and meals provided by the GES. The director made the following comments:

> In the GES we have Educational Health Unit, and a School Feeding Program. These two organizations try to assist children, especially at the primary and junior secondary school levels to look after their health. Where it becomes necessary for treatment, each unit liaises with the Ministry of Health for assistance. For example, some time ago there was a program for de-worming school children. This was provided by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The School Feeding Program was also to see that children get sufficiently well-balanced food to buy, and eat in a healthy environment.

The director was, however, of the view that the Ministry of Education alone should not be saddled with the provision of these resources. He therefore suggested that other sector ministries should help; the Ministry of Health, for example, should cater for health facilities. The director questioned the rationale for the University of Ghana, for example, involving itself in running a hospital. He queried:

> Why shouldn't the University leave this responsibility to the Ministry of Health? Why should the university provide facilities for a police station, for example? These services have nothing to do with education. They are certainly required facilities, especially in the higher education institutions. But we think they should be properly taken care of by other institutions. I think the universities have now given up the provision of meals and so on to private organizations, i.e. the canteens. The secondary schools and teacher training colleges are still doing it; but I think that gradually these services are being handed over to private organizations.

A district director referring to facilities in the primary and junior secondary schools noted that: "As far as the primary and junior secondary schools are concerned, I will say that transportation isn't much needed, because the government's policy is to locate schools within the localities so that transportation will not be needed. If you talk of health, each school has a health committee which is given some education to be able to provide basic treatment to the children. The health committees examine even the type of food that is sold in the schools. We also seek the assistance of the Ministry of Health."

According to one district assistant director, in the well-established senior secondary schools, there are sick-bays and some of them have dispensaries manned by qualified nurses and dispensers. When students are seriously sick, they are sent to the hospital. Students pay for this service at the beginning of every term, but in the first cycle schools, there are very small dispensaries and in some cases they have nothing at all. The director explained that when students are sick they are sent home, and in villages when they go home the parents do not do anything about it. He therefore felt that it was very important for school authorities to ask parents to contribute some money or use part of the fees they are paying to procure drugs to provide first aid. He added, "I think we have the PTA funds, and if the headteacher is able to press home his point, he will be able to convince the parents to use part of the money in buying drugs." On the issue of canteen the director observed:

> In actual fact in every school there is little organized canteen -- there are no organized canteens in most of the schools. They permit private individuals to sell food. Normally when officers go round the schools, they drum it into the ears of the heads that they should get at least one teacher to supervise these canteens and make it a point to taste the food which the children buy to ensure that they are wholesome. They can also offer advice.

On the question of who should run these canteens the director remarked, "I don't think the schools can afford. I think we can get private individuals who can pull their resources together to provide these services."

One headmaster of a well-established boarding secondary school observed that the provision of facilities such as school canteen, dispensary and students' transportation distract administrators' attention from the very important matters in the school and therefore should be privatized. He gave the following suggestions:

> I feel that these facilities should manned by a different entity altogether. They could make profit that way. Also the academic work will be improved because the headmaster will concentrate on the academic aspect of the school, and particularly on what is happening in the classroom instead of looking for money and chasing food. I feel these things should be run privately because that way the profit won't come to the school. So it should be government oriented, but the personnel and everything should be controlled by the school.

Three headmasters of primary and junior secondary schools commented as follows:

> Formerly we were operating a school canteen when the person operating it died. We couldn't get anybody to continue. Later we found some women whom we asked to go to the hospital to be medically examined. They have been given health certificates that they are fit to serve, and so they have been employed to serve various types of food. We have also advised them to observe the rules of hygiene. We also have a teacher in charge who tests the food to assess its quality. For first aid, we have a Red Cross group in the school. We also have a teacher who has attended a course on first aid and has been treating the children. In addition, I am the Central Region First Aid Instructor, and so I am among those who have been giving instruction on first aid.
>
> We have first aid facilities in the school and one lady teacher is responsible for it. We use part of the PTA funds to purchase drugs. We don't have a canteen, but some women have volunteered to bring food to sell to the children as an improvised canteen. An officer in the district office in charge of canteen matters provides some guidelines. We also have a food committee who appoints a member everyday to taste the food being sold on the compound to see the quality before it is sold to the children. This is a good measure in the sense that it prevents the children from going outside the school to buy food.
>
> We have no canteen, and as I am talking now we don't have any first aid facility. We are here temporarily and are planning to develop all these things when we go to our new site. There we shall be permanent. If we mean to establish them here too I am sure we can get help; just that we are not in a position to do that now.

In order to obtain money to provide these facilities, one headmaster said whenever they ran out of drugs they informed the PTA members at meetings. The PTA would then contribute about ¢3000 to buy some more drugs. Some schools have nurses among the staff who offer help. Other schools use part of the proceeds from school worship to buy drugs.

Teachers' views on the provision of these facilities did not differ much from those of headmasters. Two teachers, for example, noted:

> We have some women selling food. Formerly when it was an experimental school we had a real canteen manned by a food nutritionist. Now this is run privately but we have some teachers who supervise them. We have one teacher and a Red Cross student group which are responsible for the supervision of food selling in the school.
>
> The provision of these services is actually the work of the central government, because the community can't afford to provide them. When it comes to the question of erecting a small shed for a canteen, then of course the community can be called upon to help. The community can also cook food for the children. The government should also bear the cost of medical services to the students as was done some time ago.

Another teacher, however, was of the opinion that the PTA should be able to provide these services "because if you tell the central government, they are not going to do anything. It's all money." One teacher pointed out that she was not very happy about the way in which the school's canteen was run. She was of the view that wherever canteen operated teachers could supervise on a rotation basis. She said:

> I would rather prefer that we have a permanent wooden structure with tables and chairs and a water basin where the children can wash their hands. Because some of these children as soon as they go there they don't wash their hands before eating, and the women won't tell them to do so before eating. Even the plates they don't wash them properly; as soon as somebody finishes eating he gives it to another person to eat in it; and this applies to the cups too -- very unhygienic.

A community leader noted that initially the entire educational responsibility was that of the government. In the new government era, however, the people have realized that the central government can no longer bear that responsibility alone, and so the citizens have to start somewhere for the government to supplement. The community leader observed:

> So as far as I am concerned the community should be more effectively involved in the same way as the PTAs should be more effective. When we reach somewhere, then the government can come in to help. Some time ago during the development of our community projects, the government came in to assist us at some stage with the PAMSCAD [Program of Action for Mitigating the Social Cost of Adjustment]. What happened was that a community would initiate its own project, get on; then the government would come in to assess those efforts and offer some assistance for its completion. So it is up to us, the district assembly and citizens, to forge ahead on development issues.

A PRO said:

> If we have to be objective, then I think these services should be provided at the local level. If we want to leave everything to the central government, that will not

> work. If the local people are able to come together, plan and get some support from the district assembly, I think they can provide these facilities for the schools.

The general notion was that there did not seem to be any policy guidelines for the provision of welfare services to teachers and, particularly to students. School administrators have the option to organize these services as they think fit or even to ignore them altogether.

Summary

Welfare services are those provided in schools basically through extra-governmental channels or government incentives for staff and students. These services include canteen services (for meals), medical facilities (dispensary, sick bays, and drugs to provide basic treatment or first aid) means of transport to convey students to and from school, and various staff allowances as incentives. According to two headquarters directors, teachers receive regular transport allowances from the government. Their medical expenses up to a certain level are reimbursed by the government. The Ghana Education Service has established Education Health Units and School Feeding Programs largely in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. It does not, however, seem that these units operate effectively in all educational institutions. Since most of these services pertain to health, some people feel that the Ministry of Health should be largely responsible in order to free the Ghana Education Service personnel to concentrate on its primary responsibility of providing education. On the provision of treatment, headmasters said some schools, especially the well-established ones, have dispensaries and sick bays to provide first aid. Schools do not generally operate well-established canteens. Most schools permit women to sell cooked food to students on the school compounds. However, the sale of these prepared foods does not appear to be well-organized, although in some schools, teachers and students provide some supervision. These services are provided mostly with funds by PTAs or from other school sources. Since these services are not well-organized basically for lack of adequate funds, opinion is divided as to whether they should be funded by the government or by the local communities. Transportation is not, however, required by most students since schools are generally located within the communities or very near them.

Distribution of Schools

Schools with the requisite facilities including classrooms with furniture and equipment, libraries, and playgrounds form the basic infrastructure required to provide effective education. The extent to which this basic infrastructure has been equitably distributed among local communities in the country is an important determining factor to the success of providing universal education, at least at the basic level. To this end the research sought to determine the equitableness of the distribution of schools in the country. Respondents, mostly regional and district directors, commented on the provision of primary, junior and senior secondary schools within the education regions and districts.

One regional director, five district directors and assistant directors described school distribution that reflected different situations in various school districts. One district director said that the government was promoting the opening up of schools in the communities at least in every five-kilometre radius and that many of these schools were actually being opened. The director elaborated:

> Sometimes we find that the enrollment is too poor for some of the schools, but we still maintain them because in certain rural communities there are far away places where students have to walk several miles to school. In this case they are discouraged from attending school. So even when we see that a school is located in an awkward place we still allow it to operate, and so schools are being opened here and there. However, in places where enrollment is not very good, e.g. opening a primary school so close to another, say within a mile or half-a-mile, this is not encouraged. For example, in [name of community] the junior secondary school form one has only 21 students while another school close-by has only 22 students -- so why not combine the two to make about 40? Hence district directors have been given the authority to open schools in all communities except in places where they will be so close to an already established school to which the children can easily walk.

Referring to the distribution of senior secondary schools in the Central Region, one district director explained that in his district from [name of area] stretching to [name of area], there are about six senior secondary schools. He added:

> We can't have so many of them because the people's ability to pay and enter the secondary school is not good. So I think that very soon we will have to combine some of them. The schools are there but the problem is the number of students to fill them and their ability to pay, not that people want a school to attend but there is no school for them.

Another district director who was satisfied with the number of schools in his district as well as their distribution described the situation as follows:

> Those of us in [name of district] are lucky in the sense that we had many senior secondary schools (about eight) already existing before the reforms started. The junior secondary schools distribution is equitable in the sense that any community that had a middle school now has a junior secondary school. The primary schools were already there. When you go to the northern side of the district, the communities have put up beautiful buildings for a secondary school to start next academic year. That will serve the people around that area. So as for equity with the distribution of primary, junior and senior secondary schools, I don't have any

> problem. But if you go to a district like Elmina, they have a problem. Elmina has only Edinaman Secondary School. And when the new system started, Elmina benefited from only one new senior secondary school which was sited at Komenda. So you can imagine: if Elmina District comprises Komenda, Edina, Eguafo and Abrem, but there is only one at Komenda and another at Elmina, how about Agona and Eguafo? If you ask them to go to Komenda, it's far away; if you ask them to come to Elmina, it's far away. But happily, as a former member of the district assembly I helped them to get another secondary school sited at Abrem-Agona.

The district director explained that if any community is deprived of a secondary school, it is the responsibility of the District Assembly to work towards providing one there. This is because, according to him, "education is one of the 22 decentralized departments, meaning that the Assembly has a lot to do there and most districts have instituted educational levies to collect money for that purpose." Two other district directors described the situations in their districts as follows:

> We have about 129 primary schools and 88 junior secondary schools. These are fairly well distributed throughout the district. We try to ensure that the distance between two schools is no longer than five kilometres. Even in more remote areas such as hamlets where the population is not large, we open schools and post two or three teachers there. So as far as this district is concerned education is stretched throughout its length and breadth.
>
> I think to some extent schools are fairly well distributed. It is the responsibility of each community to make a start, and there are conditions to be fulfilled: if there are children, and they are able to put up at least a shed; but the most important condition is the children. The community should also be able to provide basic infrastructure such as furniture. They should then report to this office. We will go and inspect and if they satisfy the conditions, the office will open the school for them. The start should, however, start from members of the community. But I think even now the schools are well distributed in this district.

It was disclosed that some rural communities may not have schools because of ignorance. In this situation, one director explained that a standard regulation requires headteachers to know their school's catchment areas, check the possible enrollment there and advise the district educational authorities accordingly. If headteachers find that a community is too far from the nearest school, it is their responsibility to report. If members of that community are not coming forward, the district office should send an officer there to determine the viability of establishing a school there. One director said:

> Education is important and every community should benefit from it. If for any reason some community members are being deprived of a school then the district education office should take up that responsibility and ensure that a school is opened there. This can be done through the headteachers, teachers and circuit supervisors who are in charge of those areas.

One district assistant director who did not think the distribution of schools in his district was equitable described the situation as follows:

> When we talk about equitable distribution, I get the picture of somebody sitting somewhere and sharing property among people, but here it is not so. We are told that education is now community-based, and it is a policy that the Ghana Education Service (GES) doesn't open schools. It is the community that opens a school. Even if it is a church, we consider it as the immediate community. The church members must then get themselves organized to inform the Director about the opening of a school. The Director then sends officers to the place for inspection. One condition, however, is that as a first step, the community must have a minimum of 30 children to start at class one. They must provide three classrooms, office and a store, and furniture. It is only then that the GES is going to write to the district administration for sponsorship.

The director explained that the Ghana Education Service (GES) does not provide schools. He asserted that it is the district assemblies that should provide that but so far have not been able to discharge that responsibility. According to this director:

> All schools in the district are supposed to be District Council (DC) schools. Schools that existed before 1952 were purely government schools. From that year any school opened was presumed to be a DC school, and we expect the DC to provide school buildings, furniture, etc. out of the basic rates and market tolls they collect. But they are unable to do it and so it is the local communities that should take the initiative to provide the basics and inform the GES to do the rest.

A regional budget officer (RBO) was of the view that the availability of schools and education were determined more by the people's perception of education than the actual provision of educational facilities. He felt that in some situations people's priorities lay in some economic areas rather than education. The RBO commented:

> I think the provision of schools has to do with the people's perception of education. In the north the government is doing everything to attract people to go to school, and yet they are not going to school. So the factors are within the community itself, not external to the community. When the economy was so bad that wage employment was not respected, we had even doctors and lawyers trading. The effect was that people would look down upon education. If after all that much education, a lawyer is coming to trade, why don't I push my boy or girl through with one chit [way bill that entitled the holder to collect goods from a store]. Hence the general economic conditions have to be addressed as another contributing factor to the quality of education.

As regard what could be done in areas that were deprived of schools, the budget officer explained that the government has formulated a policy of paying differential salaries to officers who accept to work in deprived areas. Currently about 19 districts are considered as deprived in the country. Under the policy, a civil servant who accepts posting to any of the deprived districts is paid 50 per cent differential salary over what others are earning in more accessible parts of the country. Officers in deprived areas also have access to government loans. Deprived areas also attract more resources indirectly.

A public relations officer (PRO) stated that the official policy is that the each community should have at least a day school. The government is trying to discourage the boarding system in favour of day schools. In order to achieve this policy objective, the schools must be accessible to the people around so that they do not have to travel long distances, and this has been one of the main objectives of the reforms. Unfortunately it has not as yet been possible for each community to have its own senior secondary school. The officer felt that:

> As for basic education (primary and junior secondary school) most communities have got their fair share. We haven't attained that target for the senior secondary schools because of financial constraints. Right now the government has put a temporary embargo on the opening of new senior secondary schools. The reason is that we want the already established ones to be well-equipped in terms equipment, furniture, and qualified teachers. At the moment there is a lack of qualified teachers in the system. If we keep on opening new schools when the required infrastructure is not available, quality of education will continue to be sacrificed. This, however, means some communities do not have senior secondary schools.

The PRO explained that in those districts which do not have senior secondary schools, students have to travel to other areas where schools are available. This means they have to move out of their home districts, but the original plan was to enable every community to have a senior secondary school without having to travel long distances.

It appears from the overall picture that primary and junior secondary schools are fairly well distributed in most of the education districts. The distribution of senior secondary schools under the new system, however, seems to be unevenly distributed among the school communities.

Summary

From the views expressed by directors, school heads and other officials, it was observed that the government is promoting the opening of schools throughout the districts. According to these respondents, elementary schools are fairly well distributed in some districts. In other districts, however, the distribution is very uneven. Under the decentralization policy, primary and junior secondary schools must be provided within five kilometre-radius in all localities. Therefore even if a school has a low enrollment, it is still maintained unless its location is less than five kilometres from a well-established school. In such cases, two schools may be combined for efficient use of resources. Some localities do not have schools as a result of a number factors. Some districts impose levies to establish schools, but many districts have not been able to do so. District directors noted that in some communities awareness and attitudes towards education tend to be negative. In more remote areas ignorance may be a factor. In other communities, education depends on the people's perception. Even if a school exists, economic considerations may outweigh the need to attend school. In a situation where even the gainfully employed and highly educated persons are engaged in other economic ventures such as trading, people may not be convinced of the need for schooling. The opening of schools is a primary responsibility of the district assemblies and a number of conditions must be met for the opening of a school. There must be a good number of children (about 30). The community must be able to provide at least a school shed with furniture for the Ghana Education Service to take over. In the case of community ignorance, headteachers in the area are expected to survey the area and advise the district director of education accordingly.

District directors were of the view that senior secondary schools are unevenly distributed in many districts. While one district may have more than six senior secondary schools, another district may have only two. The distribution of senior secondary schools in the new system largely reflects that of the old system in the sense that the old senior secondary schools were maintained. An embargo was placed on the opening of new senior secondary schools in order to focus on the existing ones to ensure that they are well-equipped to provide effective education. Therefore up to the period in question, students whose communities do not have senior secondary schools need to travel outside to attend school. In order to encourage the opening of more senior secondary schools, government is discouraging the opening of boarding secondary schools in favor of day secondary schools. The government also provides incentives to teachers to accept posting to areas considered as deprived. These incentives include 50 percent differential salaries, and accessibility to personal loans and other resources.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has dealt with one major research question: What are the factors affecting the resource flow to basic and secondary education? With respect to the flow of educational resources to run educational programs in the regional and district offices and in the schools, a major consideration was the allocation of funds from the national coffers to the Ministry of Education. Respondents agreed that the percentage of such allocations had been increasing over the years reaching a peak of 40.7 percent in the 1994 fiscal year. Yet, from the different views expressed by the regional and district directors, school-based administrators, teachers and other officials, the government's allocation did not have the required impact on educational programs. District heads managed with whatever amount they received from the government, and whether the government grants were increasing or decreasing over the years, the allocations in real terms were generally perceived as inadequate. Directors and other officials complained about the centralization of financial administration which hampered the smooth flow of government funds. School heads, teachers and parents were not happy about the supply of qualified teachers, learning materials including textbooks, stationery, and tools. Many respondents called for measures to get such learning materials in the open market for those who could buy to do so.

On user fee increase, most respondents spoke against the idea. The notion was that even though the fee at its current level was low, it was still too high for some people. It was observed that user fees did not refer only to textbooks and stationery, but other concerns like PTA, sports and housecraft. Any fee increase would therefore bring hardships on many parents whose only option may be to withdraw their wards from school. This situation would defeat the government's policy of providing comprehensive basic education to all its citizens. Some respondents suggested that whatever fees were collected should be used to establish a textbook revolving fund.

Another proposition made by directors and headmasters was the establishment of a district endowment fund to help school development. Respondents stressed the conditions to be observed in establishing this fund for basic education. For example, contributions to the fund should not be an obligation on parents, and all primary and junior secondary schools should benefit from the fund. In particular, respondents pointed out that beneficiaries of education such as business houses should be motivated to contribute to the fund.

The establishment of a loan scheme at the senior secondary school level was brought up with parents who found the cost of secondary education too expensive. Many respondents including directors, school heads, teachers, and parents spoke against any such policy. While it might be easy to establish this scheme, its administration would be an uphill task, although some officials thought the scheme might pave the way for all students to receive secondary education as a right.

Directors, school heads, and teachers spoke in support of accountability of school administrators in respect of the use of school funds. These respondents noted that even though education funds were generally inadequate, they were effectively utilized in the interest of education. This observation, according to some respondents, could be supported by auditors' reports and comments which were usually positive. Some heads acknowledged, however, that some of their colleagues were involved in embezzlement arising out of economic hardships. Funds allocated for educational purposes through the PAMSCAD were not efficiently used.

With respect to cost-effectiveness of education, a number of respondents noted that this has not been satisfactory for a number of reasons. There is a waste in the area of personnel management. Current educational programs could be effectively funded with half of the amount of money being used now. According to some officials, too many people are employed in the education offices who do not have enough work to do. Educational achievement also appears to be low because of ineffective monitoring and supervision. And there is no consistency in the process of running the various district education offices. Another officer argued that it was difficult to determine the cost-effectiveness of education because education was not subject to cost benefit analysis.

Respondents indicated that the administration of finance in the educational system was beset with a number of weaknesses. A major weakness is that money allocated for educational programs has never been enough. This inadequacy requires a judicious use of the limited funds available now. Yet the current system of budgeting gives room for funds to go into private pockets. Whatever amount the government officials agree to provide to the school districts is generally not disbursed at the appropriate time. Directors referred to another major weakness being that under the decentralization policy. Financial administration is still highly centralized with major financial decisions taken at the national headquarters.

Respondents felt that welfare services are not satisfactorily organized, whether it is teachers' transportation and medical incentives or students' canteen and medical services. Directors were of the view that some of these services should be handled in conjunction with an appropriate ministry such as the Ministry of Health for medical services. One important students' service was a well-run canteen. Headmasters and teachers noted that these services were not being provided under any expert guidance. It was felt that since the government's hands were already full, PTAs could be called upon to help pay for these services. It was also suggested that these services could be privatized.

Respondents, particularly district directors, expressed different views about the distribution of schools in their respective districts. While some directors noted that schools were fairly well distributed throughout their districts, others referred to a different situation. Respondents agreed that it was the responsibility of every community to initiate a school through the leadership its district assembly for the Ghana Education Service to take over its running.

CHAPTER SEVEN

QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

If locally controlled schools could adopt the management practices of private schools, they might be able to provide secondary education to students in developing countries with greater effectiveness and efficiency than is presently the case.

Lockheed and Zhao (1993, p. 48)

The current educational reforms were initiated nationwide in September 1987. Prior to this period, some reforms had been attempted on an experimental basis in a number of schools in the education district capitals. Under the 1987 reform measures, significant changes were initiated with regard to the curriculum content, duration of pre-university schooling, effectiveness of the secondary school system, and employment prospects for secondary school graduates. This chapter addresses the eighth and ninth research questions, viz: What have been the outcomes of the efforts made at providing more resources for education? What are the issues to consider when responsibility for providing resources is devolved to the local communities? These questions addressed the theme, quality assessment of the educational reforms, and is presented in four sections to address the following topics: (1) assessment of the basic and secondary education curricula, (2) effectiveness of the junior secondary school program implementation, and (3) employment prospects for secondary school graduates.

Assessment of the Basic and Secondary Education Curricula

Respondents were asked to comment on the relevance, adequacy and the quality of new curriculum and the evaluation measures designed for the primary, junior and senior secondary schools. Six directors from the national headquarters and education districts, five headmasters, two community leaders, five teachers and four parents expressed common views on the curriculum and a general consensus was that the subjects introduced, especially at the junior secondary level, were too many for the very young students to cope with. One headquarters director, for example, commented:

> At the basic education level, especially at the primary school, we think the subjects are a bit too many. The Ministry has therefore set up an education review committee of which I am a member to look into it. We are going to look into the number of subjects, and I am sure that number will be reduced. At the moment students are studying nine subjects, and we think if they offer between four and six at the maximum, that will be fine.

A senior secondary school administrator felt that with regard to the curriculum, the very first issue to examine is the staff situation of any institution. This official noted that of all the problems confronting the schools, the most pressing one was the need for well-trained and qualified staff and, more importantly, people who were prepared to work. According to this official, it was very rare to find people who had come to the school because they wanted to work. He observed that people were sometimes posted to a school against their will, or they simply wanted to be in a situation where they would earn something at least, but not because they were prepared to work. To address this problem, he suggested the need for school heads to focus on these issues and try to call everybody to order.

A district director stated:

> I have no objection to the introduction of practical subjects in our schools, but here there is a problem. It looks as if a school serving one whole area has been asked to choose only one or two vocations. This implies that all children in that school must learn only one or two subjects. But there may be a student who doesn't have a flavour for that subject but is being compelled to learn it. The child will naturally lose interest and will not be serious with it. Secondly, if you talk of equipment, they are not forthcoming. If you think of materials, they are not forthcoming. If the government commits itself to a program, it must find the money to run it. After all we know that we have individual differences. It is difficult to imagine how a whole lot of children in one area can learn only a particular trade. It means that if a child wants to learn this or that trade, then he or she must move away to another place.

The director suggested that subjects should be spread in every school from which the children could select. Money and personnel should also be provided to cater for the interests of a large variety of children. A district assistant director felt that the current curriculum is so heavily-loaded and so broad that something should be done -- either to reduce the number of subjects or narrow the scope of some of the subjects being studied. According to the director, in both junior and senior secondary schools, students study so many subjects that they are unable to go into any depths for each subject and this has resulted in poor results for the first senior secondary school final examination. When the director was asked to explain the rationale behind the introduction of so many subjects, he replied:

> I think the Ministry wants to expose students to many subject areas so that by the time they enter senior secondary school they would have some idea about everything -- a broad kind of knowledge. But we are saying that the subjects are too many. Let's take those who do G.C.E. 'A' levels, for example. They offer only four subjects including general paper. But for the senior secondary school examination students offer six core subjects and three electives, making a total of nine subjects. I don't think pupils can study each of these subjects into any great

> detail so as to pass well in an examination. The solution is that the number of subjects should be reduced.

However, according to one headmaster of a senior secondary school, the curriculum for both junior and senior secondary schools is right because the child must have a broad foundation and the curriculum as planned can provide that broad foundation of knowledge. He, however, reiterated that the senior secondary program was not properly planned. As a consequence of poor planning, everything is out of touch with the reality, and the students feel hard pressed with their studies. He noted, "the program is planned by the policy makers who simply ask us to implement it. Then we become more concerned with what went wrong than what should be done right in the first place." Two junior secondary school headmasters commented on the curriculum as follows:

> We have many subjects on the curriculum -- in fact, too many. Imagine junior secondary school students taking 12 subjects for their final Basic Education Certificate Examination while the more matured GCE students take less than that. The junior secondary school students are very young and this number of subjects will cost them too much. So we have made some suggestions in that regard to the Ghana Education Service, and there are plans that in the next year or two, the subjects studied in primary schools will be reduced to four or five.
>
> The curriculum is OK; the only problem is that we think the subjects are too many for the children if we take their age and experience into consideration. As heads we feel that after studying all these subjects from junior secondary school form 1, in their final year they should be permitted to select some subjects as it is done in the second cycle. In the second cycle students study many subjects in forms 1 to 3. When they get to form 4, they are required to choose subjects which are related to their chosen careers. So we feel the 12 subjects which the junior secondary students take at their external examination are far too many. A student's chosen career should determine the number of subjects the student has to take.

Teachers also agreed that the subjects studied at the junior secondary school were too many. One of them listed the subjects as mathematics, English language, Ghanaian language, science, technical skills, vocational skills, life skills, literature in English, religion and environmental studies. One teacher commented on these subjects as follows:

> The new educational reform has introduced a number of subjects that are geared towards helping the pupils in their lives, such as technical skills, vocational skills, and the languages, among others. But I think an important subject like religion is being relegated into the background. If the growing child is given moral education through religion, I feel moral education will help not only the child but the entire society in the long run. Because of the strong influences of the TV and the newspapers on the community, and peer groups who are all educating their fellow children, if religion is not given strong emphasis, a time will come when our children will not learn anything moral. And this will cause social problems.

A teacher who was quite vehement in her stand against the large number of subjects, argued:

> How do you expect a 10- or 13-year old child to study 13 subjects -- to pass an examination? And how do you expect the society or the community to provide teachers to teach all these 13 subjects in one school? Or do you expect a teacher to teach three or four subjects at a go? If one teacher is asked to teach three or four subjects, assuming we want to economize so that, as the government has directed, the number of teachers in a junior secondary school is not more than five, that means on the average teachers are going to teach three different subjects each. Do we expect the teacher to do a thorough preparation for the teaching? I don't think we can expect that, given the fact that in our society today people have other things to do when they return home from work.

A community leader praised the new junior secondary school concept and said "It wasn't there in our time when after completing school, one had to go in for a white-collar job. Today pupils learn practical skills while they are still in school. So after completing school they can establish their own business shops." Giving a specific example with his own child, the community leader said:

> I have one child in junior secondary school form 3. When I asked him the type of job he would like to do after completing school, he replied, "I will do electronics." When I asked him why he said, "This time everything seems to be computerized, and government jobs are no longer available. So if I learn some trade, at least I will be able to do something on my own for a living."

Summary

Directors, headmasters and senior school administrators, a community leader, teachers and parents who commented on the curriculum generally agreed that up to thirteen subjects studied in the schools, particularly at the junior secondary school level, were too many. It was, however, observed that the introduction of these subjects was an official policy to provide the children with a broad educational foundation. Most respondents strongly suggested a reduction of subjects to about six for the final certificate examination. Some respondents also noted that, given the low age and experience of the children, their learning was only superficial, and that accounted for the generally poor performance of the children in their final examinations. Learning was out of touch with the reality. Respondents also mentioned the problem of qualified staff, particularly for the science and technical subjects. One problem identified was lack of incentives like good staff accommodation to attract and retain qualified staff who had genuine interest in teaching. Another problem was the structure of the system that required individual teachers to teach about three or more subjects at the same time. The Ministry had appointed a committee to examine the curricular problems and to propose measures to resolve them.

Implementation of the New Secondary School Program

The newly introduced three-year junior secondary school program was the centre of the education reform. It was the transitional stage between primary school and the senior secondary school programs. Consequently its effectiveness was crucial to the success of the entire educational reforms. One basic assumption was that such success would be largely determined by students' level of performance in their final examinations and their prospects at the job market. Respondents were therefore asked to comment on how they perceived the junior secondary school program in terms of (1) examination performances, and (2) employment prospects.

One headquarters director agreed that:

> Students' performance at the secondary school final examination was bad because the children involved were those who passed through the primary schools when the state of affairs there was really poor. They didn't have textbooks. They didn't have anything. Most of them could not read anything by the end of primary six. Now with the introduction of the educational reform, the resources we have put in the schools, and the training being given to teachers, there has been some improvement even though it is not as good as we thought it would be. The performance is improving gradually. Surely some of these same group of children passed well through the system. We hope that those children who entered primary one around 1989/90 are those who are benefitting a great deal from the resources we have put into the system and the training being given to the teachers.

When the director was asked to comment on the public criticism that the reforms started from the middle level of schooling rather than from the primary school, the director took pains to explain the controversy as follows:

> The reforms started from the primary school. You see, people are saying that the reforms started from the junior secondary school. It is not true. The educational reforms actually started in 1974 when new syllabuses were written based on the 1973 Dzobo Report. The Ministry selected the Dzobo Report which had already been partially implemented since 1974 and decided to work on that. Syllabus writers took the 1974 primary school syllabuses and, based on them, wrote the junior secondary school syllabus. . . Based on the former primary school art and crafts syllabuses, the syllabuses were upgraded for use in the junior secondary schools. The topics were a continuation of the primary school courses, only that they were described in new terms. For example, life skills were made up of needlework, nutrition, art and crafts for the primary school. In the previous primary school syllabus there wasn't much emphasis on the environment; that is now emphasized. All these subjects were integrated to become life skills. Therefore what is being learned at the junior secondary school level now is not something different from what is done in the primary school. So when people say that we started the reforms from the mid-point of schooling, it is not true.

An assistant director representing the regional director was asked to comment on the results of the last junior and senior secondary school examination results. He said:

> Well, I went for students' examination report cards from Accra, and I sat on the board for the selection of junior secondary school graduates for admission to the senior secondary school. What I realized was that there were so many passes. Wesley Girls, for instance, had passes in six subjects. Some students even had up to ten, eleven and twelve passes. So when we started the selection for admission, we started from those who had twelve passes. By the time we reached those who had seven passes, we had got the number required for the senior secondary school admission. It was very difficult for the board to select even those who made eight passes. There were more passes than could be absorbed by the senior secondary schools. So those who got even six, seven or eight passes could not be selected for admission.

It was noted that the school cited as an example by the assistant director was among those categorized as grade one schools. The director was therefore asked to explain the situation pertaining to schools which had less endowed students. He explained that in every system the beginning is always hard, but as the system moves along and the people become more experienced, and teachers are able to teach the children better, better results would be achieved. The director was not sure whether the West African Examinations Council lowered its pass mark level to declare more passes, but according to the published results, "things are improving," he said. He conceded that schools located in the rural areas still had problems. According to the director, a school like Wesley Girls admitted its students mainly from the big cities like Accra and Kumasi, and was therefore most likely to admit bright students to start with. Students in the rural schools generally had aggregate of about 20 as against aggregate 12, 13, etc. obtained in many urban schools. Consequently only a few of the students in the rural schools qualified for selection to the senior secondary school. When the director was asked to explain the factors that accounted for poor performance in the rural area, he replied:

> There are a lot of factors. Students in the cities have access to various facilities such as good teachers, well-to-do parents, extra classes, international schools where students are well prepared, libraries, and so on. But go to the rural areas -- even if a child has a good teacher, after learning in the school he goes home and doesn't see the books again. They think of going to catch crabs, grasscutter or something like that. In fact, the situation there does not attract them to learn. There are no lights, etceteras, to entice them to learn in the evening. They play around, and sometimes even the teachers are not serious, because they themselves are not happy where they are. In the villages it is difficult to force a child to learn. During market or fishing days, they will leave the classroom for the market, no matter what you tell them. They want money, especially when the parents are poor. Perhaps it is from there that they get money for school -- to eat, or to pay their fees.

One regional office director was asked to comment on how teachers in the rural areas can be motivated to work more effectively. She was of the view that:

> Teachers can be given difficult stations allowance to induce them not only to stay in the rural areas but to work harder. We had a letter directing that we should post teachers to places which are difficult. We thought they were going to reward them; that expectation ended nowhere. But that is one of the things the government should do -- certain amenities like houses, electricity, water, and all those things that make a place interesting should be provided them. Radio and TV, and bicycles should be made cheaper for them to buy, and with good roads leading to those areas so that they can move in and out. All these amenities are very important inducements to make teachers feel like living in a big town.

Many district assistant directors and district directors expressed similar views about the rather poor performance and the reasons, particularly in the rural schools. Three of them commented as follows:

> Four batches of the junior secondary school and one batch of senior secondary school products have already passed out. Generally there has been some improvement; there has been some improvement, but I will say that in some of the rural areas, because of lack of qualified teachers, some of them have not done very well; that must be pointed out. It is a matter of getting teachers and other facilities to those areas. Good teachers mostly tend to be in the urban areas.
>
> The number of subjects taken at the junior secondary level and at the Basic Education Certificate Examination are too many, and must be reduced. I can say the same thing about senior secondary level, the reason being that the three years spent at the senior secondary level, to me is supposed to be a combination of GCE 'O' and 'A' levels. In the present system we are offering seven core subjects and three electives. When we compare the old system with the new system, we find that they were doing both 'O' and 'A' levels at the same time. Now they are doing ten subjects. The number of subjects is too many.
>
> Our main problem is the fact that we start school with only one language, that is our local language. We don't change over from the local language to English fast enough for the pupils to be able to express themselves well in English. In Canada, for example, I am very sure if students start school with English or French, they use that language throughout. Here as soon as a child attains the age of two-and-half, we should change over to English.

One director, however, agreed with the general argument that too few students qualified for the university under the new system, and the explanation was that brilliant students from the old system with whom the new system should have started were taken away from the system to join the old system. And the reason was that many parents felt sceptic about the quality of the new system and so did not want their children to take any risk. Hence, it was argued in some circles that in the main, academically low students started the new system, and that adversely affected the final examination results. One director was asked to explain why people seemed to prefer the old system to the new when a new system was supposed to be of a better quality education. The director gave the following explanation:

> The new system started with very few textbooks. We had the syllabuses and we had orientation on how to deal with them, but some teachers did not know the level at which the children were to be examined. I told them that a number of these kids are sure to go to the university, hence the teachers themselves should find the appropriate level to achieve some improvement so that we might produce high quality students out of the system. There were no examination guidelines, but now we have at least one set of past examination papers which will serve as a guide to teaching. When you are starting a new thing it is not easy. People probably have misplaced optimism about what they expect from the system. Even though the reform has not been as successful as we all expected, we should not panic but appraise the system and find right solutions to whatever has gone wrong.

Another district director expressed the following views about the system:

> I think you will agree with me that every new program that is designed should be allowed to operate from about five to six years before we can make any fair assessment. We have just started this program. The junior secondary school was started in 1987 while the senior secondary school started somewhere in 1990. For the junior secondary school we can sit back and make some sort of assessment. And I think it is making some successes, but with the senior secondary school, it is a bit premature to come to conclusions. People are saying that the pupils have failed and so on. I don't think that is a fair judgement in the sense that if an assessment of the pupils done through an attainment test, is later reviewed in terms of a placement test, then people are not being fair. One yardstick is being used to measure different things. The senior secondary school exam is supposed to be an attainment test. So if the results are judged in terms of the child's capabilities and that sort of thing, fair enough.

Supporting his contention that the examination results were not being fairly assessed, the director quoted the following paragraph from an official circular from the Ministry of Education :

> Analysis of 1993 SSCE Examination Results:
>
> Enclosed is a detailed analysis of the November-December examination subject by subject. You will notice that the English-Science-Mathematics caused the problem. But when you look at individual results, a wrong impression has been created to the nation that the students did not do well. How could a student have grades A,B,C; D,D,D; or B,B,C,C; D,D,E,E and F in English not to have done well?

The explanation was that many students passed well in the arts, humanities, and social science subjects supposed to be elective, non-compulsory subjects, but failed in the three compulsory subjects: English, Mathematics and Science. However, no matter how well a student passed in the electives, failure in any or all of the three compulsory subjects closed the door to the university to any aspiring student, as indeed was the ultimate objective of a vast majority of senior secondary school students. The universities required passes at certain grades in nine subjects. According to this director, it was not fair to declare that a student had failed totally because such a student did not pass at those expected grade levels. The consequence is that these apparent failures have discouraged students because everybody is condemning the system. This situation was dragging the government into a very awkward position that, as a government, it hadn't done well. The director declared, "the government has done well so far as the reform program is concerned." When one director was asked to explain the official policy of the Ministry of Education on the examination controversy, he said:

> There has been a talking point on it. Interviews have been held on it, and officials from the Ministry have gone to the radio and the TV to explain the issue. The point, however, is that not all parents are enlightened to the extent of understanding the professional terms and jargons used. So we at the district level in our own small way have asked our counselling officer-coordinator to be educating the parents as well as the children so that they may understand. I have been helping in that aspect myself even at the Directors' Conference.

According to this director, at a directors' meeting one colleague who remarked that the students had actually failed, was vehemently challenged on his stand by other directors. It was argued that in reality every student had found his or her own level, and that if the universities did not obtain a certain number of students for admission, that number should not be misconstrued to imply that everybody had failed.

A senior administrator in a senior secondary school believed that given the initial problems that confronted the reforms from the very onset, the achievement of the students was something to be commended. He noted:

> I think the performance of the senior secondary school students is an issue which has been overblown. As far as I am concerned, they performed very well in view of the initial problems -- time factor, their own academic standards at the time of admission to the various programs -- these had to be overcome. It is stated by Professor Moses Antwi in his book, *Society, education and development,* that in Ghana those who enter the university directly from school at anytime are very few, including even those who have passed through the five-year and two-year secondary school programs. Other people have to attend other institutions and may be after many years enter the university. In view of this fact, if we have over a thousand students who qualify to enter the university, that is a very good achievement. It looks like those who are looking at the issue are basing students' performance upon those who qualify to enter the university. But I don't think that is the most important issue.

According to this official, after making an assessment in his own school, they found that many students qualified to enter other tertiary institutions. Out of about 140 students, 86 passed with some of them making five passes with good grades, some making grade 7, 8, and so forth, and who could enter other institutions. The limiting factor was that out of nine subjects, a student must pass well in six -- all six core subjects with a minimum of grade D, and three electives. Some students passed in all the core subjects, passed in two electives and failed in only one. Therefore, if the university entrance was not used as the basis for good performance, then there was a large number of other students who could enter the polytechnics and other advanced institutions. "Consequently, the overall achievement was not that woeful," said the administrator. Referring to the initial problems which confronted his own school at the beginning of the reform, a senior official described the situation in his school as follows:

> Taking our own school, for example, we started on a very uncertain footing because we had no workshops or classrooms, and for a whole year we could not even teach students who had been admitted. And when we started we were not familiar about the syllabus and a whole lot of things. We started to size up things and adjust, and this took a lot of time. The whole first year was wasted. And I cannot tell of any teacher on the program who could say that he completed his syllabus or covered even two-thirds of it. We also realized that even the students that were given to us were not very good on the whole. The very few who met the initial admission standards were able to make the final grade. In fact, out of about 100 students admitted, only about 30 of them qualified to be in a secondary school by any standard. And when we assessed them, at least in my own subject area, 27 passed. I told the students that there were some of them who should not have been admitted anyway. And there was no provision for any student to repeat a class or to be withdrawn from the program so we promoted all of them each year. But out of about 30 students whom I actually felt could make it at the end of the program, 27 could make it.

One assistant director in another district felt that the examination results were commendable to some extent. According to him, however, supervision at the junior secondary examinations were not effective, because a lot of the pupils obtained examination grades when they had no strong foundation to make those grades. The assistant director pointed out that the problem of weak foundation surfaced when students went over to the senior secondary school. He noted, "a student boldly said that the results of the junior secondary school examination made them believe that they were good, but when they went over to the senior secondary school, they realized that they didn't know much. This is one of the reasons why many of them didn't do well in their final senior secondary school examination."

Another district director was of the view that the way in which the examination issue was presented to the public was the cause of the uproar surrounding the educational reforms. He reasoned as follows:

> I will equate the new senior secondary school student with a former lower six form student. When students write their final examination at the end of the upper six form, we don't have any publicity about it. The results are published and are

> treated confidentially. Only selected students are picked for the universities. No publicity is made. So what is the point in making so much publicity about people being admitted to the university from this new group? Does that mean all others have failed? And yet when you study the program, it makes it clear that from senior secondary school, some students will enter polytechnic, some will go into teacher training, while some will undertake nursing training. Have we found out how many students qualified to go into these areas? Why didn't the officials mention these admissions as well? So you see that just singling out the admission to the university and basing the results on that is not reasonable. There was a mistake somewhere in the presentation of the results to the public. And this has actually convinced the public that the whole new system has been a failure.

Therefore, contended this director, the system was not a failure since it was not even known how many students had qualified to enter other areas of post-secondary education. The director argued that even in the previous five-year secondary school program, not many students entered the universities. Referring to the old system, he asked, "If we had about 10,000 students, could we be sure that about 1000 would enter the university?" According to him only a small number of students entered the university in the old system. The rest found other avenues and there was no public outcry about it.

In spite of the above observations of the district director, a senior educator in a senior secondary school admitted that some mistake had been made with the take-off of the educational reform program throughout the country. He said that experienced teachers, parents and educationists had advised that the new program be mounted gradually and on experimental basis, taking cognizance of the basic problem of inadequate resources. The officer recounted:

> It appears the policy makers have now realized the mistake they made. So they have suspended further opening of senior secondary schools for two years. They now want to channel resources to redress the problems. There must be adequate supply of teachers for all subjects. If we really want to do away with the lop-sided nature of education and to provide technical and vocational skills to students, then emphasis must be on the provision of materials for technical and vocational skills. That provision must be made. Under the present program, a lot of money is being pumped into remedial classes for those who failed in their final examinations. These remedial classes have been supplied with adequate textbooks and other provisions for practical work and so on. These things have not been provided to the regular schools. So if we don't take care, a more serious mistake will occur with the regular students. In order to make sure that this problem is removed, facilities must also be extended to the regular schools. It is good that we are suspending the opening of new senior secondary schools, but let's make sure that adequate and experienced teachers are there, all the equipment needed are there, and in fact, all the logistics that we need are put in place to make sure that better results are achieved.

Explaining the reasons for the ban on the opening of new senior secondary schools one district officer said:

> I am able to see that it all has to do with equipment. Many of the schools have not been well-equipped -- for example, with equipment for science and technical subjects. Moreover, on the question of teachers who will handle these subjects, many of the schools have not been well-staffed. They haven't got subject teachers to cover all subject areas. Therefore if we continue opening more schools then we are becoming more handicapped. Hence, there is a need for that ban. According to the Minister of Education, money that is to be used to open new schools will be used to equip the existing schools instead.

On the effectiveness of the junior secondary school system, the officer noted that the new system was consistent with the systems already in operation in other neighbouring countries. He noted:

> As for the usefulness of the system, I must admit that it is very useful -- absolutely useful. In the first instance, when I hear people trying to condemn the system, I give the example of the change-over from driving on the left to the right. Before that change, many countries were driving on the right while we were driving on the left, and so we had to switch from the left to the right. The same can be said of the metric system. We had to change from the imperial system of measuring things to the use of metric system at a time when many countries were already using the metric system. In the same way you can realize that almost all West African countries are operating a junior secondary school system. In this case it is only reasonable that we in Ghana also operate a junior secondary school system so that at least we can have a unified examination system that can be easily managed by the West African Examinations Council. Therefore, we also have to go the junior secondary school way. That is one good example I often cite in support of the junior secondary school system.

The officer remarked that the different parts of the reform make it a very noble idea. He conceded, however, that its achievements have been below expectation. And one major reason, according to him, was the government's inability to provide the requisite qualified teachers. For example, many schools did not have technical teachers which has affected the total effectiveness of teaching and learning in the system. The officer expressing optimism about the system observed:

> I am optimistic that all will be well ultimately. For example, the newly opened technical colleges are producing trained teachers who will come out to fill the vacant teaching positions in the schools. As soon as that is done we shall start reaping the benefits of the reforms. We should start reaping those benefits in about five years time. Our major problem lies with the technical subject areas. As for the other areas of learning, we have quite enough teachers in the system as obtained in the former days. So in five years time, or ten years at the latest, we shall produce more technical teachers than we will need for the junior secondary as well as the senior secondary schools.

Explaining the basis of his optimism, the officer referred to some of the specific efforts being made towards the production of qualified teachers:

> In all regions technical schools have been opened to train technical teachers to fill the vacant positions in the junior secondary schools. Some regions have two of such training institutions, for example, Cape Coast Technical School. Because they are expected to teach, they are also learning classroom management as part of their training programs. Teacher training colleges are also specializing in different subjects. So once a student enters a training college he will have to specialize in the subject offered there. For example, some of the colleges offer agriculture, technical or arts subjects, science or languages. Once the teachers come out, they are assumed to have specialized to become say, agriculture teachers, fine art teachers, or technical teachers. When they are posted to a school, they will then be expected to handle those subjects in that particular school.

The officer added that the universities were also training teachers in the various subjects. Such teachers were expected to train in more than one subject. For example, a teacher who was studying music as a major subject would also be required to study cultural studies consisting of religion, music and social life. Such a teacher would come out to teach not only music, but culture in addition.

Commenting on the results of the first senior secondary school examination, two headmasters said:

> Personally I wasn't surprised because in the Central Region, for example, we conducted a standardized examination for all senior secondary schools in the Region. The results were very disappointing. In fact we were shocked by the performance of the children even in the so called key schools. We thought they were going to perform wonders. We compared all results and found some inconsistencies. Students who had scored grade 1 in six subjects or even in twelve in the regional examination performed dismally in the national examination. The way and manner students were assessed by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), were also not appropriate hence, the results of the examinations were not good.
>
> The examination results are not somewhat encouraging; but all this came about because during the implementation of the program, it should have started from the primary school where the children would be well prepared. The whole program started in such a manner that every middle school -- even in the villages where there were no teachers -- was converted to a junior secondary school. The foundation was not good, such that when a child reached the junior secondary school 1, even how to write his own name was a problem. So even though the teaching is effective, the children are not well equipped from the primary school; so the results are not encouraging as such.

One primary school head gave a very good account on his school's performance. He noted, "Our first products had 100 percent passes and so were the second batch. In the third batch we had one failure. One or two female students became pregnant and so could not write the exams. So teaching in the school has been effective."

Teachers expressed similar views to those held by headmasters. One teacher explained the issue as follows:

> I have always maintained that the planners were handicapped from the beginning. For this reason the first batch of the junior secondary students had not completed their syllabus by the end of the third (final) year. Therefore when these students entered senior secondary school form 1, it was there that they had to study the junior secondary school form 3 syllabus. So instead of using a senior secondary school material at senior secondary school form 1, they had to study a junior secondary school material. The required textbooks also arrived very late. Moreover, new subjects were introduced at the senior secondary level in which the students did not have any foundation at the junior secondary level. These subjects were taught at the senior secondary level under the assumption that the students had been given the basic foundation at the junior secondary level. The students were naturally handicapped in learning these new subjects.

This situation meant that the senior secondary school students went to sit for their final examination when they had not been adequately prepared for it. And the teacher noted that this has been a major contributory factor to the mass senior secondary school failures, and yet the government officials are blaming the teachers. The teacher was asked what in his opinion could be done to help them cope with the situation in the classrooms. He said:

> I believe that the problem should be tackled right from the primary school. The number of subjects studied at the primary level should be reduced. The primary school teacher is currently overburdened with the many subjects he has to handle there. He is being asked to teach about eight or ten subjects. Definitely one teacher cannot prepare adequately to teach these many subjects. Another problem is caused by the continuous assessment and the cumulative records. If a teacher handles a class of about fifty pupils and has to prepare continuous assessment and cumulative records continually for each of them, you can understand their problem. There should be specialization and the subjects handled by a single teacher should definitely be reduced.

One other teacher commented on the issue as follows:

> The results of the first batch of students were better as compared to the second batch. The second batch was not good. We heard that because it was a new system the examination markers were asked to lower the exam pass marks. But when that idea began to spread, the pass marks were somehow raised again. This is how we see the whole thing. Teaching and learning in the school were, however, a contributing factor. Teaching and learning materials were not adequate. For some of the subjects too, we did not have qualified teachers to handle them, especially the technical ones.

A parent noted that education differs from generation to generation. If the new secondary school is what we have in this generation, then it should be embraced by all. The parent observed, however, that the implementation of the new program had been delayed and the delay had adversely affected everything. She noted that at least the program led to the acquisition of some skills such as carpentry, masonry, and fitting. The implementation was not, however, well effected by the implementers. Only some few schools in Ghana (the experimental ones) provided their children with effective learning. She said, "The new system appears to be something that was forced on us, and has confused us, otherwise it would have been very good." According to another parent:

> We heard that many of the students did not pass the final examination. I asked a certain teacher why, and what he said was that English language caused their downfall. Moreover, children these days are ruffians. They are playful in the classroom at a time when they are being taught. While a teacher is actively teaching them, their minds may be on something else. We also hear that sometimes teachers do not teach well enough, or that they don't teach what they should teach, and so some of the faults lie with teachers.

On the question of textbooks, a parent felt that asking parents to buy textbooks for their children was the ideal thing. The parent observed, "Unfortunately the textbooks are not on the market. The government has monopoly over the textbooks. Personally, if I had been asked to buy books for my children, I would have done so willingly because I am sure if the children have books which they take from home to school, and from school to home, it will give them better learning-teaching experience than what we are doing now. So the books should be on the open market so that we could buy them."

Summary

Interview responses indicated divergence of opinions as regards the overall quality of the new junior and senior secondary school programs. Most of the directors, senior school administrators, school heads, teachers, and parents acknowledged that the overall quality of the new secondary school programs was below expectation. According to some respondents, however, it was still too early to make any fair assessment of the system, even though it was noted that some gains had been made. Some students did pass well and there were some advantages for pursuing the system.

According to some respondents, the system was laudable because it was consistent with the current systems operating in other neighbouring West African countries. Pointing to some of the achievements, some directors and school-based administrators noted that many of the criticisms levelled were unfair and unfounded. Their argument was that it was not valid to use university admission as the only yardstick for assessment. Only over a thousand students out of over 40,000 students qualified for university admission. In the opinion of some respondents, while it was true that fewer students than expected gained admission to the universities, many others qualified to enter other post-secondary institutions such as teacher training and nurses training colleges and polytechnics. Moreover, the final examinations which was designed as attainment tests were later perceived as placement tests. Nevertheless, problems of the reforms had been identified and were being tackled.

Respondents observed that the quality of the system had been very low. The reform measures were taken in a rush, and the Ministry of Education did not consider views from other quarters. It was also pointed out that the Ministry of Education bypassed the Ghana Education Service as the custodian of the implementation of educational programs, to give instructions to officers. Most children could not read anything by the time they completed primary six.

Respondents identified a number of problems that caused the poor performance. They noted that the children involved were those who passed through the system when the state of affairs in education was really poor, especially in the rural schools. Moreover, students who started the new programs were generally of low calibre, because academically good students were withdrawn by their parents from the new system to enroll in the old system which suggests that these parents foresaw problems with the new system. Among these problems were lack of teaching and learning facilities, particularly textbooks. Schools in remote areas woefully lacked school facilities. Many schools did not have workshops or even classrooms. For many schools, the required textbooks arrived only a few months or even weeks before the final examinations.

In terms of subject passes and examination grades, the handling of the examinations by the West African Examinations Council was also questionable. The examination questions were alleged to be of too high a standard for the students. Qualified teachers were in short supply and those in the rural schools were seriously handicapped. The number of subjects recommended for study at both school levels were too many for children of those tender ages to enable any meaningful absorption. Teachers were overloaded with the handling of large class sizes and continuous assessment and cumulative records. The number of subjects for the examinations, six core subjects and three electives for the junior secondary school, for example, were far too many. Initial subject combinations as required by the Ministry of Education confused many students as some of them were forced to study subjects they had little interest in. The use of English language was another major problem. As a medium of instruction, the effective use the English language started rather late, thus students did not acquire a strong command in its use.

Some teachers did not know how to handle effectively the new syllabuses or the subject matter because there were no guidelines for them to follow. Familiarization of the syllabuses by teachers took considerable time. Most junior secondary school classes could not complete the recommended syllabuses by the end of the junior secondary program which meant that extra work had to be done at the senior secondary school level. Hence, a suggestion of an additional year was made which was rejected by the Ministry of Education. Many heads and teachers felt that one major problem was that the reforms started at the middle level of the system instead of laying a foundation from the very bottom -- primary one -- an argument that was strongly refuted by a headquarters director of education. Teachers felt that if the reforms had begun with students starting education from primary class one, the overall results of the reforms might have been a better.

According to some respondents, however, some measures were already being taken to address some of the problems. The opening of new senior secondary schools had been suspended to channel all available resources to strengthen the existing schools. Technical schools had been opened in all regions to train teachers to meet the need for technical and vocation teachers. The universities were also training more teachers for the various subjects.

Employment Prospects for Secondary School Graduates

The quality of the educational reform programs could also be assessed in terms of the achievement of one of the major objectives of the new system namely, the extent to which the products could fit into the open job market in wider society. To this end respondents were asked to express their views on how the graduates, particularly those from the junior secondary school could obtain jobs with their qualifications or could be self-employed. Five district directors, four assistant directors, five headmasters, four teachers, two parents, one community leader, and three other officials expressed diverse views on job prospects for the junior and senior secondary school graduates.

In terms of job prospects, an assistant director in a regional office noted:

> As at now we have both the old and the new school systems operating. In the new system we haven't seen how its products will fit in the society. In the old system I know that at least when a person completed forms 5 and 6, he could be fitted somewhere. He could at least be a pupil teacher for some time. But we are yet to see how junior secondary school graduates can fit into the employment community.

Two district directors commented on the job prospects as follows:

> At the moment I don't see clearly how the new system is working. The whole idea of reform is laudable but the implementation is becoming difficult. Financial constraints is one issue. The launching of the program itself was not put on good grounds in that before you start something the materials must be ready, especially teachers who will implement the program; but there is a lot of teachers who have

> not moved abreast with the new program. Technical and vocational teachers are not enough. Many schools are looking for technical and life skills teachers who are not readily available. This is the problem. Our inclination is now geared towards technical and vocational skills, but these teachers are not many in the system. So until these teachers are available to teach, the problem will be there.
>
> I specialized in curriculum studies, and I know that we should train children to face the real situations in society, to enable them to play their roles. But I am not very certain whether this concept is understood by all and sundry. The new educational policy is that we should make the children self-sufficient. A few students have been turned out who can be successful in businesses. These people are now able to find their way out in life. Some of them are in gainful employment. Some have managed to establish their own small private businesses.

Giving suggestions on how and where to start this traditional education, the district director was of the view that those who have already passed through the education system should set examples. The director observed:

> When I started building a house in my village, people started asking me why I didn't build it in Accra [the national capital]. None of my colleagues was willing to build a house in the village. But when they saw that my building project was progressing well, and that I always went to live there, others started building there. Now we have three others who have completed their houses there. A fourth person has just started building there. I started farming there and the people are now admiring the progress I am making. So it is up to us, the educated section of the society, to take the lead by setting good examples for others to copy. The values of most of us are not set right. We have become so urbanized that we don't even want to visit our villages.

One assistant director noted that the government alone cannot absorb all students who pass through the new system. Therefore emphasis should be placed on high quality education as well as on the improvement of the private sector so that private businesses could absorb some school graduates. The assistant director suggested that if the central government made it a responsibility to encourage private businesses to improve upon their performances, they would be in a position to employ school graduates. The director said that a lot of people were already being redeployed even in government businesses because there was no work for them in most cases. This situation suggests that even if all graduates qualified, they could not all be employed by the government, but a high quality education may enable such graduates to be self-employed.

The points made above suggest that the achievement of the job objective of the junior secondary school program depends on several factors and not only on what happens in the classroom. Yet, given the current structure, the program is unlikely to provide adequate education and skills with which graduates could become self-employed. The program may only provide its graduates with some foundation for later apprenticeship before the products can become employable. As one director pointed out, "the students are only exposed to a number of vocations so that when a student gets the chance to enter the senior secondary school, he acquires more skills, and from there could even go the polytechnic to specialize in his skills." The suggestion then is that if a student terminates his education at the end of the junior secondary school, the parents must provide him with some further training through apprenticeship. And parents themselves must be aware of the need for such further training since many of them may regard the junior secondary school education as the end of it all or that a child is a failure if he does not gain admission to the senior secondary school.

A senior administrator in a senior secondary school noted that there were not sufficient jobs for secondary school graduates. On top of that people were being laid off. Senior secondary school graduates were supposed to do a year's national service as a form of initial employment. However, according to the officer, no employment provisions through the national service scheme had been made for graduates who were coming out from the junior and senior secondary schools. According to him:

> Senior secondary school pupils were supposed to do national service, but it turned out that there was no money to pay their monthly allowances. As at now, after spending so much money to train teachers, the new policy is that newly trained teachers will have to stay at home until approval has come from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning that there is enough money to pay their salaries before they move into the classrooms. It means that the unemployment problem will persist. Students will be there. Teachers will be trained with the nation's hard earned resources, but they will do no teaching until the approval that there is money to pay them before they go to teach. What they are saying is that junior and senior secondary school graduates will have to constitute themselves into co-operatives and societies to be able to do something on their own.

The above comments suggest that the problem is not merely a question of inadequate teachers, but also lack of money to pay salaries of those who have been trained. A senior district administrator explained that the new educational system was largely geared towards self-employment. Hence if, for example, a child who studied agriculture was unable to go to university after his secondary education, he could apply for some loan to do farming or piggery. Others could use their loans to do carpentry, leather work, masonry or on any chosen field of specialization. This policy has not, however, been put in place because graduates could not engage in any meaningful employment. He observed:

> If you assess the junior secondary school results, you can see that it has been a failure, because those who passed out are still roaming about. They are not self-employed as was expected. The senior secondary school products are yet to be assessed and the government has directed that they should do remedial courses and re-sit the examinations to better their grades. Those who can make the grade will go to university or other tertiary institutions. So they are yet to be assessed so far

> as employment is concerned. The senior secondary school so far has not been successful in terms of what the graduates can do.

Explaining what could be done to ameliorate the situation, the officer was of the view that if practical learning materials were provided, students could learn well enough to be self-employed. Learning materials were not in the schools for students to use. They were not taught how to manipulate tools. Moreover, teachers to teach technical drawing and technical skills were not there. Some students were taught by teachers who were not qualified. Some schools had only a skeleton staff to teach. Some new schools did not have teachers for most subjects. The officer then observed, "If students lack technical ability how do they work even if they acquire some loans? So it is up to the government to ensure that more technical teachers are trained to fill the vacuum."

A senior district officer, however, felt that the assessment of the extent to which secondary school graduates could be employed, particularly at the junior secondary level, was based on wrong notions. He said:

> Let me correct the impression being carried by some people. At the junior secondary level, students are only to be exposed to the various skills, and that is the objective of the junior secondary education. It is not to make the products self-employable. It is not true that after completing the junior secondary school a child can enter the employment market to work. They are only to be exposed to the various skills, so that as an individual student if you are ambitious enough, you can choose what you are competent in and pursue it at a higher level. At that stage you will not have to start from the scratch as if you did not know anything. At least the foundation would have been laid for you to build upon to make your learning faster if you attach yourself to some expert in your chosen field. Hence it is not true that the junior secondary school can turn a product into a grade one carpenter.

The above observation stresses the need for students to receive further education in the senior secondary school or further training through apprenticeship.

As regard the new junior secondary school program, an assistant director explained that a good number of junior secondary school students were expected to continue their education at the senior secondary school. Those who do not enter senior secondary school would have been exposed to some basic skills. The first step towards employment would have been taken as was done in the old middle school system. A child's interest in a particular trade might have been identified through exposure to the various skills at the junior secondary school. Through the learning of some skills a child could select a trade and learn it further. Once the child already knew the uses of certain tools like the saw, the plane, the chisel, the trowel and how to handle them, further learning would become quicker and more interesting. The child would have already been committed to learning that trade. And there were other avenues for those who do not enter senior secondary school such as the commercial and vocational schools. They could learn typing, secretaryship, catering or dressmaking in such institutions. An important point to consider is that they would have already learned life skills at the junior secondary school and would have acquired how to handle tools to accelerate their learning in these schools.

Headmasters expressed varied views on the employment prospects for secondary school graduates. They generally agreed that the new junior secondary school program was not meant to equip the very young children with job skills that would enable them to seek employment. According to some headmasters, the new program was only meant to expose students to the handling of tools. And the objective of that exposure was to accelerate subsequent learning of trade at the senior secondary school or through apprenticeship training. Two of them commented on the issue as follows:

> One area of our program that I can identify as directly relevant to employment is that of woodwork and carpentry. Students who seriously tackle that subject benefit a lot. Many of them have parents who are carpenters and so they acquire some skills even before they come to school. Therefore with a little push by the school they are able to do very well. That is the only area that I can safely say is well geared towards employment. But with regard to the other subjects it is a problem because the resources are difficult to come by.
>
> The new program is geared towards employment, but it will all depend on the children's own seriousness inside and outside the classroom. If they are serious and learn hard, they can get jobs because what we are teaching them is the right knowledge that will give them jobs to do; but if they are not serious then even though we are doing the right thing, they cannot get the jobs.

One headmaster of a senior secondary school observed that the employment issue was a problem. According to him, although the emphasis in the new program was on the acquisition of skills, the learning of skills was not well catered for. He noted, "For instance, for the technical subjects we find it very difficult to get the teachers. The equipment for the practical work are also not coming. Since the new secondary school program was introduced only the technical tools were brought here; the teachers are not here to teach."

Another headmaster strongly called for some balance between theory and practicals in the new program. The headmaster thought that there was still too much emphasis on book work since the workshops and tools for practical work were still lacking in the schools. He noted that it was with these tools that the students could be constantly exposed to their use to facilitate job specialization. He remarked:

> We still don't have a workshop. We only have some work benches on the verandah which the children use. By the time the tools are conveyed from the tools room to the learning area, part of the time will already be gone. Then some time must be left at the end of the period to pack them and clear up the place. All these things waste valuable time. If we had workshop, the tools would always be there ready for use. There would be no need for carrying tools here and there to waste time. Thus the current atmosphere is not conducive for effective learning. Also considering the student enrollment, the quantity of tools we have is not sufficient. During lessons not all children get tools to use. Some of them will have to simply stand and stare, and wait for others to finish before it gets to their turn.

The comment suggests that considering the time limit, many children will most probably not get sufficient exposure to learning the use of the tools for much of the program duration. It may therefore be difficult to expect such students to enter straight into the job market unless some avenues are found for further apprenticeship training.

As regards what could be done about the insufficiency of the tools in his school, one headmaster said that a common notion in the schools was that learning tools were not sufficient, and the general assumption was that the government would provide some more. He, however, noted that since 1987 when they had the very first supply, there had been no more supplies [about seven years earlier]. He added, "Some of the first supplies have broken down; some have been lost and we have not been replacing them. It is therefore difficult to imagine how learning can take place when tools are not added to, repaired or replaced. The community or the PTA should be able help but they are also complaining. They don't have money; even the small fees they have to pay, they are not able to pay." From the views of some headmasters, it was also not simply a matter of asking the community to make monetary contributions in any form since the government's policy stood against such unapproved contributions towards education. And members of the community were very much aware of this policy. Therefore no lasting solution seemed to have been found for the general inadequacy of tools and other learning materials since the government was unable to make adequate supplies, and at the same time ruled against schools asking the community members to pay towards such materials, even if they were willing to do so.

Teachers expressed views which were quite similar to those of the headmasters. Three of them commented on the employment issue as follows:

> The government cannot afford to employ everybody. In view of that the reform program was geared towards helping students to become self-sufficient with employment. I will say the program is alright but the way it was implemented is giving the government itself a problem. It is also a problem to teachers because of the limited facilities. The staff number is not adequate, and so teachers' load of

> work becomes more tedious, because we have a lot of students and a lot of work to do. And, we have to compile continuous assessment.
>
> The students are learning skills such as carpentry and masonry. We have a workshop over there. Time has been apportioned so during technical skills period, for example, the teacher concerned comes to teach those skills (both theory and practical). We therefore assume that by the time the pupils complete junior secondary school, at least they would have grasped the basic skills of handiwork.
>
> In actual fact what we were made to understand at the initial stage of the implementation of the junior secondary school program is not what we are seeing at the moment. We were told that the children were going to be prepared so that after passing out of the system they could use their hands to do something at least, even when they were awaiting results. But as at now we don't teach the practical aspects of the program. It is still the theory aspects that we are doing.

The above observation implies that it was not clear what the junior secondary school program was supposed to accomplish -- whether to prepare students for employment or introduce them to the use of tools. One teacher suggested that since teachers with the practical knowledge were lacking, the government could employ local artisans such as carpenters, tailors, masons, and electricians to teach the practical aspects of the programs even if on part-time basis. It was also suggested that the number of theoretical subjects be reduced by integrating some of them so that more time could be spent on the practical subjects. Another teacher noted that even though teachers were being trained, the number was not adequate and that there was a need to train more teachers. He observed that because of lack of motivation many teachers quit teaching. And the number of teachers who leave the teaching field is almost the same as those who come out yearly from the training colleges. The teacher called for some sort of motivation for teachers through, for example, better conditions of service such as health benefits. The observation suggests that without incentives, training more teachers would not have the desired impact on teaching, since many of them were likely to quit teaching only some time after their training. An example was cited where two people having completed the same program in a college enter different occupations: one to teaching and the other to a bank. The latter obtains some benefits including a car loan and a bungalow; the former leads a very frustrated life. And when this struggling colleague is unable to cope with the situation, he manages to leave teaching for a better job somewhere. The notion is that unless teachers' conditions of service are seriously addressed, the attainment of adequate trained teachers to fill the classrooms may be a formidable task.

Two parents highly commended the idea of introducing pupils to many subjects in new program. One of them said that the introduction of new subjects in the sciences, general arts, vocational and technical skills, would provide every pupil something he or she was capable of learning. Unfortunately, however, the qualified teachers were not there to teach the subjects. Secondly, the government appeared not to have the resources to help the pupils in their studies. The parent observed that the subjects were very relevant to what they needed to learn to fit well into the society and to promote the society's development as well. Learning had not, however, been adequate since the inception of the program. Therefore, the parent also suggested:

> What I think we should do in this regard is to solicit the assistance of tradesmen -- carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers, etc. -- in the community. They can assist students in learning these skills. In the former continuation schools we had teachers some of whom were local masons, carpenters, seamstresses, and leather work teachers. Suddenly all we found was that their appointments had been revoked and they had been removed from the classrooms. Nobody gave any reason for their withdrawal. Qualified teachers were in the area of general arts and the sciences, but none in the trades. With this unhealthy development the pupils did not gain anything practical.

Another parent observed that while parents were prepared to help pay for their children's education, it was the children's responsibility to identify their interests and pursue them in an appropriate institution for their future employment. She said:

> What our children will do later depends on the type of school they attend and the certificate they get, for example, polytechnic, junior secondary or senior secondary school. A child must be given the opportunity to continue her education in order to learn practical things, so that she can become a matron, air hostess, etc. It all depends on her intelligence and how hard she can study. Now many people know their left and right, so children should learn hard to obtain what they want for themselves. We parents will strive to do our part, even if it means taking a loan to look after them in school.

Another parent stated:

> In the junior secondary school, we were made to understand that after going through it a person could rely on the acquired skills to provide himself some sort of employment so that even if he does not go to university, he will have something useful to do. But as at now looking at those who passed through the program, I can't see anyone who can depend on his skills to do carpentry or anything. They can't do anything with any skill they are supposed to have acquired.

This view, as has been noted previously, was similar to those held by some headmasters and teachers. Parents' view points out a number of concerns in the new school system including the need to emphasize the practical aspects of learning which also require knowledgeable teachers. And some of them feel that as far as teaching of practical skills was concerned, local artisans could do equally well in the classrooms, though obtaining the logistics for such proposals might not be straightforward.

A community leader asserted that some teachers were using archaic methods to teach. He suggested that such teachers should update their teaching skills through attendance at refresher courses to be exposed to the new syllabuses and new ideas. He cited an example of a previous teacher assessment program in which it was found that untrained teachers who possessed only the GCE 'A' level were better skilled in teaching than were the previous certificated teachers. And the reason, according to this leader, was that the old teachers were using old methods. The community leader, however, noted that part of the blame could also be put on parents because they encouraged their school children to trade instead of studying. He said:

> Some children have been exposed to trading and so have money. So a child goes to school only when he feels like doing so. I know one girl attending a secondary school here who operates a very big cosmetic store at the market. She attends school for the fun of it and just to please the parents. Such students do not even respect their teachers and won't take instructions from them. The teachers are also afraid to spank the children. Today the least spanking you give a school child will land you at the police station. In 1991, a headteacher friend of mine was locked up in police cells for spanking a school child; we had to go and bail him. So now many teachers don't care about what the child does in school. So some of the faults lie with the students, but greater part of it lie with the parents and teachers.

A university administrator felt that after completing junior or senior secondary school, a training program in the form of stop-gap should be organized for the graduates. He noted that even at a higher level of schooling, students do not have ample opportunity to learn the various trades effectively to become full-fledged carpenters, masons and so on. Therefore after the senior secondary school program, those who would not continue at a higher level could benefit from a training program. This program could also include drop-outs. Pupils who after completing primary class six could not continue for various reasons, could also benefit from the training program. The officer suggested, however, that such a training program should operate outside the formal school system, and the government could appeal for foreign assistance to provide this type of training. As regard how this training program should be paid for, the officer suggested that tuition should be free just like the other systems we have in the country. He observed:

> The training institutions should be day and not boarding institutions. Of course they will need equipment and so parents can be called upon to help. Parents should be able to feed their wards. There should be a canteen where the trainees may be provided one meal say, lunch everyday. But before and after training parents should be able to feed their children. Even if meals are free it will not be out of place, because the training will be work oriented, and so as they are learning they will be producing goods to sell. After they have been in the program for a year or so they would become very productive. The carpenters will be able to produce furniture which could be sold to defray part of their training costs. That training should be a missing link between the junior secondary school program and practical

> employment. Mere exposure to the use of tools is really not what we finally aim at. Like the senior secondary school, the training programs could be made community-based. The community could assist in this respect, but the initiative and orientation should come from the government.

A regional budget officer commented that the problem being encountered in the system was that people were looking up to the public sector only for employment. He pointed out that in situations where students were being trained in the entrepreneurial skills to set up their own businesses and manage them, the society was moving in the right direction. He observed that the public sector was choked and that the educational system should be restructured in a way so that people were not trained to seek employment only from the public sector but try to generate employment for themselves -- self-employment. He explained the issue as follows:

> There are two issues involved: if you are in a self-employed situation and have the right entrepreneurial skill to set up your own business, you are also solving the employment problem situation by employing others. So the curriculum being followed should be able to push up entrepreneurs. If you push up ten entrepreneurs, ten people are not going to seek jobs in the public sector. Then when they set up their own businesses they may employ twenty people each, and straightaway, you are employing 200 people -- a multiplier effect. And I think the current reforms are addressing this issues and must be actively pursued.

A public relations officer said:

> Employment is exactly what the educational reform is all about. We realize that the type of education handed over to us at the time of independence could not produce self-employable people. They always looked up to the government for employment. Hence in these reforms, vocational, technical and life skills are being emphasized so that by the time students pass out, they would have received some form of training to be able to fit well in the economy. What is happening, however, is that we don't have the qualified teachers to handle these subjects in the schools. The result is that we are back to square one. We have been able to get some tools for training, but because we don't have the qualified personnel to teach the subjects, the children are not benefiting from these tools. The children are therefore coming out with no skills or specialized knowledge to be on their own. It seems as if we are still doing the old things.

The views expressed by the respondents point to the fact that employment for secondary school graduates as a major objective of the reform program was far from being attained owing to the constraining factors enumerated by the respondents. The responses suggest that most people are aware of the constraints. Addressing them has, however, been problematic and a number of solutions have been proposed.

Summary

Respondents, particualarly district directors, headmasters and teachers, agreed that employment was a major objective for the school reform program. However, to a very large extent, this objective had not been realized. Opinions were divided as regard what the program was meant to accomplish in terms of employment prospects for the new secondary school graduates. Some respondents said that the program was to prepare students for employment in the public sector or be able to engage in self-employment. Other respondents were of the view that the junior secondary program was only meant to expose students to various skills and the handling of tools in order to accelerate later learning or apprenticeship. This divergence of opinions seems to lend credence to some respondents' view that the program lacked effective and adequate planning initially and that its implementation was becoming a difficult and unclear task.

Headmasters and teachers particularly, pointed to the lack of adequate resources such as qualified teachers to teach technical, vocational and life skills, as well as counsellors as an evidence of poor planning. Many schools had been supplied with tools only once in many years. There were no teachers to teach the use of these tools in many schools. Therefore some of the schools which had been supplied with some tools still had them packed somewhere. Through losses or lack of further supplies from the government, schools which had teachers to teach the skills did not have adequate tools to do so. Moreover, some teachers had no knowledge of practical skills to teach them. Many schools did not have workshops and tools were kept in different locations which wasted valuable teaching and learning time because the tools had to be conveyed here and there. In spite of the government's inability to supply all the resources needed in the schools, respondents noted that an existing government's policy prohibited schools from asking parents and members of the community to make any unapproved monetary contributions. This policy was meant to protect citizens from being asked to pay for resources that may inflict hardships on poor citizens.

The initial plan of providing loans to school graduates to set up their own private business did not materialize because graduates did not have the expertise to set up their own businesses. Some directors felt that schools were still teaching book knowledge and stressed the need for education to reflect societal values, and to realize these values, educated people must lead their communities to stress traditional values of production. It was pointed out that the old system was still operating alongside the new system. Although teachers were insufficient in the classrooms, newly trained teachers could not be posted to the classrooms, according to a directive of the Ministry of Finance and Economic

Planning until funds were available to pay their salaries. Moreover, many of teachers in the classrooms quit teaching because of poor service conditions for teachers. Some teachers were also observed as not moving abreast with the new system, and were not conversant with the new syllabuses. Some respondents therefore suggested the appointment of local artisans such as carpenters, masons, plumbers and electricians to teach some of the practical skills in the schools. A training program was also suggested to provide further training to secondary school graduates to make them employable.

Many respondents noted that the government cannot provide employment for all school graduates single-handedly. For example, the government's instituted national service scheme which was to serve as a preparation ground for employment, was unable to serve this purpose owing to lack of funds to pay the allowances of the national service personnel.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on the research questions concerning the outcomes of the efforts at providing more resources for education. It also addressed the socio-political, moral and ethical issues regarding the responsibility for providing resources by members of the local communities. These issues were addressed in four sections: (1) assessment of the basic and secondary education curricula, (2) effectiveness of the junior secondary school program implementation, and (3) employment prospects for secondary school graduates. In the data presentation, one major observation is that any adequate measure of productivity depends on satisfactory measures of inputs and outcomes, whether financial investment in a university compared with the labour market value of its graduates or the learning achievement and capacity of the pupils at entry into and exit from a secondary school (Ball, 1994, p. 7).

On the first section -- assessment of the basic and secondary education curriculum -- respondents including directors, headmasters and senior school administrators, community leaders, teachers and parents noted that the subjects studied in the schools were too many. Respondents called for a reduction of subjects taken at the final examinations. The children were too young and inexperienced to cope with too many subjects. Respondents referred to a number of problems that confronted the new system. These included: lack of qualified staff for the science and technical subjects; lack of incentives to attract trained staff; teachers required to teach three or more subjects at the same time; too large class sizes, and the preparation of continuous assessment; ineffective use of the English language; weak handling of the syllabuses by teachers; and starting school reforms at the middle level instead of laying the foundation at the primary one. Heads of schools suggested an additional year to enable students to cover the syllabuses, but this suggestion was rejected by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education was, however, aware of these problems and had appointed a committee to examine and suggest measures to address them.

Respondents differed in their perceptions about the quality of the new senior secondary school programs. Although some gains had been made, educational administrators, teachers, and parents were not satisfied with the general quality. Some respondents noted, however, that it was too early to make a fair assessment of the programs. One objective of the new system was to make educational programs consistent with those in neighbouring countries in West Africa. Respondents differed in their views about the performance of students in the final examinations. A very small percentage (.025%) or about 1000 out of 40,000 students did qualify for admission to the university. Others could, however, qualify for other post-secondary institutions including teacher training, nurses training colleges and polytechnics. A number of respondents attributed the poor quality of the program to the initial rush in planning as well as the Ministry of Education's unpreparedness to seek or accept different views from the communities. There was also ineffective collaboration between the Ministry of Education (the policy maker) and the Ghana Education Service (the policy implementor). One measure to correct the imbalances was to suspend the opening of new senior secondary schools. The Ministry of Education opened technical schools in the regions to train teachers to meet the need for technical and vocational teachers. The universities were also training more teachers for the various subjects.

On employment prospects, while the respondents, including district directors, headmasters and teachers, agreed that employment was a major objective for the school reform program, they noted that this objective was far from being realized. The secondary school program had not adequately prepared students for self-employment or employment in the public sector. It was not even clear whether the junior secondary program was to prepare students for employment or be exposed to some skills and the handling of tools. Hence it was some respondents' view that the entire program lacked effective initial planning. Respondents also pointed to the lack of adequate resources such as qualified teachers to teach technical, vocational and life skills. Consequently schools which had been supplied with some tools did not use them. Also, some teachers could not teach the practical skills. Lack of workshops where classes could be held was a major impediment. It was the government's responsibility to supply the resources to the schools, but the government had not been able to live up to this responsibility. Yet schools did not have any authority to ask for monetary contributions from the community. Hence, schools were still emphasizing book knowledge instead of practical skills as envisaged in the new program. Teachers were in short supply. Teachers were being trained, but owing to lack of funds, such trained teachers could not immediately enter the classrooms until funds were available to pay their salaries. Owing to lack of incentives some teachers were inclined to quit teaching for other jobs. Some respondents proposed that local artisans such as carpenters, masons, plumbers and electricians be appointed to teach some of the practical skills.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATIONS

It is rare that actual outcomes are the same as those predicted when plans are made. Inaccurate forecasts, competitive moves, unforeseen events, unanticipated difficulties, lack of adequate resources, changing environmental conditions, new underestimated constraints, unpredicted resistance to implementing the plans, and many other factors can affect implementation and cause deviations between plans and reality.

Makridakis (1990, p. 127)

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the current administrative procedures under which the Central Government, local communities and non-government organizations are providing resources through partnerships for pre-university education in Ghana as a function of the devolution policy. The provision of resources for education is such an expansive and expensive undertaking that unless diverse organizations and institutions are brought together to form strong partnerships in that endeavour, the goal of mobilizing adequate resources, or at least improving the current provisions, may be hard to attain. Such partners will be required to operate under clearly defined policies within which the role of each partner is duly recognized, and structures put in place to enable each partner to play its role effectively.

This chapter discusses the key aspects of the administrative procedures related to educational resource provisions as noted in the interview data presented in the previous four chapters -- 4, 5, 6, and 7. The discussion examines some approaches to consider in addressing some of the setbacks observed in the financial provisions.

Commitment to Effective Implementation of the Devolution Policy

Devolution is the most decentralized system of administration in which decision-making powers are firmly and formally transferred to legally constituted local bodies. It involves the strengthening of sub-national units of governments to provide social services to the communities. This definition reflects the current organizational structures established in Ghana to provide social services, including education, to the people. Yin (1980, p. 116) observed that decentralization may produce outcomes including increases in the flow of information, changes in service officers' attitudes, changes in clients' attitudes, improved services, or increased client control. Based on this assertion, the study examined to what extent the intended outcomes had been realized in the attempts being made in Ghana, particularly as they related to education.

Respondents in the study referred to the Central Government's initiatives to devolve decision-making authority from the national headquarters to the local communities, as part of the measures to improve the provision of social services. One major step taken to effect the devolution policy was the establishment of district assemblies as the highest decision-making organizations in all the 110 districts in the country in 1987. Such transfer of power, as Yin (1980) suggested, might mean increases in actual power exercised by the clients of social services, or greater territorial division in the administration of a service. In their current structure, the assemblies consist of elected and appointed officials who represent various constituencies in the districts. Along with the district assemblies, 22 sector ministries, including education, are deemed to have been decentralized. Directors of education considered as highly experienced have been appointed to replace the former assistant directors with the objective of strengthening the administration of education in the districts. Consequently, a number of educational responsibilities are expected to have been transferred from the national and regional centres to the districts.

The measures noted above suggest an effective administration and mobilization of resources locally for education. However, from the responses of district directors, school heads, teachers and other public officers, a number of bottlenecks existed at all levels of administration -- national, regional, district, community, municipal and school levels. These bottlenecks have impeded the smooth administration and mobilization of educational resources. One major cause was lack of commitment on the part of senior civil servants currently at the helm of affairs in government agencies, particularly at the national and sub-national (regional) levels. Recent political and educational history of Ghana indicates that many unsuccessful attempts had been made to decentralize the administrative machinery in Ghana, largely due to the non-commitment of government officials. As Asibuo (1992) noted, public servants responsible for the success of governing policies did not demonstrate the political commitment necessary for their success. Among the reasons for the lack of commitment was that senior civil servants saw the new policy as a threat because it would reduce their influence and prestige. Yet an effective implementation of decentralized decisions requires a total commitment of national and sub-national officers and administrative personnel to the implementation of any new policy. Such commitment implies giving up some or majority of the previously held titles, privileges and benefits associated with any positions as required by the new policy. These issues are examined below.

Administrative Procedures in the Directorates

In the new administrative structure, both the region and the district are currently headed by senior officers at the rank of director. The regional director is, however, considered as a divisional director who also co-ordinates the activities of the district directors within the region. A handful of interviewees noted that the concept of decentralization was working in some ways, as one director observed in the following comment:

> I think the decentralization is a concept that is working in the sense that before this policy came into operation, virtually everything had to be obtained from say, [Name of town] Regional Director. For that reason certain policies which had to be implemented immediately were delayed for some time. Now the few *cedis* allocated to the districts are channelled through the Regional Director. So we do get our pittance to do the few things we are supposed to do.

However, the majority of responses did not seem to support such positive observations. Several directors declared that they did not see their way clear since some functions supposed to have been transferred to them were still being performed at higher levels, particularly at the regional directorates. Some administrative personnel in the regional offices still do not appear conversant with many aspects of the policy. Such officers by-pass the regional director to give directives, and appear not prepared to give up functions performed by them under the previous centralized administration. It must be borne in mind that a circular letter, G.E.S./HQ/PG. 573/20 dated 5th August, 1991 from the Director General of the Ghana Education Service to heads of department clearly outlines the functions of directors at the regional and district levels as well as regional managers of schools. The circular concluded:

> It is expected that within the limits defined for the decentralization process, Regional Directors and District Education Officers will exhibit maximum co-operation which would bring about increased morale and efficiency of teachers in the teaching/learning process.

Under these directives, therefore, no duplication of functions at the regional and district directorates need have arisen. That certain officers were still performing administrative functions that fell outside their jurisdiction implies that these officers may still not be conversant with their job descriptions or were not committed to the success of the new policy. It is hardly necessary to emphasize the commitment of government officials to the success of the policy. If these officers demonstrated sufficient commitment, then even if they were not conversant with what they were required to do under the new policy, they would strive to know. This situation calls for a reappraisal of directors' and managers' functions, and periodic seminars for such officers towards that objective might be one strategy to consider.

The notion that regional officers have less work to do, a situation which suggests redundancy or loss of privileges for them, might be one contributory factor to what officers at the local levels saw as "usurpation" of their authority. Also some functions are supposed to be performed at both the regional and district offices. Weiler (1990) points out that in education governance, decentralization involves redistribution which deals with power sharing, and efficiency geared towards enhancing cost-effectiveness of an educational system through a more efficient deployment and management of resources (financial, human, and material). In Ghana, a case in point is that basic and secondary education functions are now being performed at both the regional and district directorates, but the division of functions does not seem clear to officers at both directorates. Hence, school heads, particularly at the second cycle, could report to either the regional director or the district director in accordance with their own individual preferences. This conflict of power, is more prominent at the regional capitals where both the district director and the regional director reside. This practice might depend on an officer's convenience as well as his or her proximity to the regional director. It might also be due to school heads' unwillingness to accept and deal with district directors as required by the new policy. These situations have caused overlapping of functions, duplication of efforts and dissipation of human and material resources.

Under the devolution policy, the understanding is that district directors are experienced officers who could be relied upon to make responsible decisions. Financial decisions, for example, are among the most crucial decisions to make and implement, yet district directors said the policy required them to seek approval from higher level authority such as the district assemblies, for financial decisions, experienced as they were. Respondents' comments indicated that the official requirements to seek clearance before acting in many instances produced frustrations for district directors in exercising authority under the new policy. Therefore, as noted by a regional budget officer, in areas of finance, education was still largely centralized and district directors did not have much control on finances. And as Weiler (1990) cautioned, without real transfer of influence away from the central authority of the state, significant new resources are unlikely to be forthcoming from either the local level or the private sector. A public relations officer at the district level commented that:

> . . . even though the authorities are saying that education has been decentralized to the district level, it is not working in the sense that we still have to carry out instructions from Accra, the headquarters. We cannot initiate any policy on our own. We are still implementing policies initiated by headquarters, and there are

> many things we have to consult headquarters about. We don't make use of our initiative in many matters.

Centralized financial and administrative decisions mean a major curtailment of district directors' decision-making authority. This curtailment raises questions about how much development initiatives in education a director could take at the local level. A regional budget officer pointed out that the decentralization policy was supposed to introduce new financial administrative procedures through composite budgeting, but because composite budgeting had not taken off, there was still a fairly centralized structure in operation. It was not clear why composite budgeting had not been implemented, but the contention is that some level of commitment on the part of the Ministry officials would be necessary to implement such proposals.

The above observations point to the existence of some major setbacks in the building of partnerships such as the curtailment of the district directors' authority and the non-implementation of composite budgeting proposal. Responses also indicated that currently, the regional director, as a co-ordinating or divisional official, serves as the liaison officer between the headquarters and district officials. This position seems clearly defined and should not engender any administrative bottlenecks. The regional director was, however, cited by some district directors as an impediment to smooth administration in some districts. Some of the administrative practices reflect bureaucratic procedures -- the old way of doing things -- which undermine the efforts at mobilizing resources for education. Thoughtful efforts should be made to ensure that senior government officers understand and accept the issues involved in transferring power which they may interpret as loss of control and privileges. Towards that end, functions at various organizational levels would have to be clearly specified. Any redundancy that might occur as a result of reallocating functions, might then be resolved by transferring the affected officials to different locations. If bureaucrats do not subscribe to these propositions, or strongly object to them, then perhaps the time might still not be opportune to undertake decentralization until effective civic education has been provided them. That might also mean postponing the efforts at generating additional resources. The nation cannot, however, afford such postponement.

The School as a Basic Decision-Making Unit

While it is important to understand how legislative decisions and bureaucratic rules affect resource allocation, it seems equally critical to examine the link between macro policy-making and classroom organization (Wong, 1994, p. 284). When a school district restructures from a highly centralized form of management to a decentralized one, changes occur in the procedures by which the district is operated. These changes create uncertainty and may give rise to confusion and resistance. To reduce the risk of a failed transition, all key players -- including central office administrators, principals, teachers, and other employees, students, and parents -- need to be firmly committed to the idea of decentralization regardless of where the idea originates (Neal, 1991, p. 18). Under the devolution policy, the school is supposed be the basic decision-making unit. As a unit, the headmaster or headteacher, with a team of teachers, parents, and students where applicable, would confer together to take decisions that fell in line with the district's educational objectives, and were consistent with national educational goals. The headmaster, with a school council comprising of representatives of these bodies, must be given some responsibilities as the governing body.

National headquarters directors observed that heads of basic and second cycle schools had been vested with the authority to make decisions at the school site. However, according to a number of schools heads, only minor decisions such as the making of furniture and repairs could be made. One point noted from school heads was that the exercise of authority seemed to differ at different school levels. Heads of primary and senior secondary schools, for example, felt quite comfortable with the amount of power they exercised. Heads of junior secondary schools, however, did not think they had been vested with enough power to make decisions. Apart from the collection of officially approved fees, school heads could initiate some financial decisions, but only in consultation with parents at parent-teacher association meetings. Such decisions were also subject to the approval of the district director. The director's approval or rejection largely depended on whether or not such decisions were consistent with the Ministry's policies. It therefore seemed as if the Ministry was still largely in control of educational affairs in the districts, and for that matter, the schools.

It was also observed that the policy had empowered school heads, for example, to discipline defaulting teachers, and that heads were expected to exercise such powers to enforce discipline if they were not already doing so. This view suggests the need for more commitment on the part of heads who thought they did not possess the authority to run their schools. Some junior secondary school heads, for example, thought that they did not possess any such power as one head noted:

> We feel that under a decentralized educational policy at the basic education level, since we have confidence in the headmaster who proved at an interview that he is qualified to head a school, all powers should be given to him to administer the school . . .

Teachers' views, to a very large extent, supported the notions held by heads as illustrated by the following comment from one teacher:

> Decentralization as it stands is: bringing authority from the headquarters to the local level. We have heard a lot about this decentralization; it is on paper, but when you come to the field, you'll see that despite the fact that power is at the grassroots, certain ideas generated are subject to the approval of the headquarters.

Odden (1992b) contended that taking site-decentralization seriously must be done in fiscal terms that require site-based budgeting. In Ghana, one major stumbling block was that the Ministry of Finance was still highly centralized. Under the current reform program, the relationship between the Minister of Education, the local government, the district education authority, and the school -- the headteacher and the school council, need to be clearly spelt out. Indeed, it might not be feasible at this stage in Ghana's educational development to suggest total school-based budgeting, a policy under which a bulk sum would be allocated to schools to do their own staff hiring, purchase learning materials and equipment, and so on. However, headmasters would require empowerment to some level where they could make some financial decisions for school efficiency.

The District Assembly's Control over Educational Programs

Yannakopulos (1980) pointed out that most of the time there are no agencies or groups of persons with special functions who are charged with educational administration at the municipal (or local) level. The result is that there are no criteria, norms, priorities or basic information which could support a co-ordinated development of an educational system. It is noteworthy that district assemblies had been established to co-ordinate the attempts being made to provide education and other services. The district assemblies, as newly formed local bodies (PNDC Law 207, 1988), stand at the centre of development activities at the community level. Thus, currently, community-based authority is expected to be exercised by the district assemblies. The assemblies are perceived as major partners of the central government in undertaking development projects and providing social services. They have a social services sub-committee charged with educational matters peculiar to the districts. Educational matters are first submitted to the assembly for debate and for a decision to be taken. Such matters are no longer to be referred to the regional or the national headquarters. According to one respondent:

> There are so many community programs on which the assembly has representatives. In the selection of headteachers for primary schools, for instance, the assembly is represented on the interview panels. Also with the introduction of senior secondary schools, the district assembly is supposed to bear one-third of the cost of buildings such as libraries and classrooms.

The district assemblies are the only local bodies vested with constitutional authority to make and enforce laws related to community development. Hence, even those decisions taken by the district director of education are subject to approval of the district assembly. Their financial viability is crucial to the successful discharge of their functions. They receive government grants to which they are expected to supplement through their own local mobilization efforts. They have power to impose taxes to raise local revenue. With this revenue, they are expected to undertake community projects and social services.

Responses indicated that the assemblies have run into social problems in the discharge of their functions. They often imposed levies, a function which has not been popular and does not receive approval from government circles. Hence, in the exercise of its power, the assembly is regarded by some respondents as acting beyond its powers. Under the devolution policy, local administrative power is supposed to have been firmly transferred from the national headquarters to local administrators. Yet under current administrative structures, the district head of education, while being responsible to the district assembly, is also accountable to the regional director of education as well as the headquarters. As an education head and a specialist in the field of education, the director does not have the final say in matters affecting education.

Participants, however, did not make it clear who had the final say in educational matters. As one director pointed out, it seemed like everybody was "working in his own interest." According to one community leader, the decentralization program was very good, but it was up to the assemblies to be effective in enforcing their laws. Decentralization, as currently practised, has been problematic as a result of the assemblies' ineffectiveness in ensuring popular participation in educational programs. Apart from parents who felt somewhat committed to education, no organizational structures had been designed to promote education.

Bacchus (1990) emphasized that when a government is trying to increase community participation in the provision of educational services, it may find that decentralization of decision-making in certain key areas such as allocation of schools and the construction of school buildings are helpful in its efforts to secure greater community support for such activities. The Ministry of Education expects members of the community to play an active role in the supervision of their own schools, but to a large extent, this was not being done. The assemblies looked up to the central government for the bulk of their finances. These finances were, however, not efficiently administered, partly because funds were provided in bits, and partly because funds were not despatched at the appropriate time. The effect is that education has not received any significant progress in spite of the measures being initiated by the central government. These are important issues that require the attention of key players to provide continued progress in education.

Parents in Co-operation with School Authorities

There was a general consensus that parents provided consistent support to school programs. This support, from the parents' own statements, derived not from the exercise of any power. Their commitment to the success of schools was apparent in their dealings with schools in which they had enrolled their children. Such commitment was reflected in the activities of parent-teacher associations. Parents were abiding by PTA decisions even if such decisions were taken by a few of their active colleagues, as noted by two parents:

> The association meets and decides on all matters. "In fact, I don't attend meetings quite often because of the nature of my work. Most of the times I am engaged in the office, so I am unable to attend."
>
> Sometimes I am not happy over certain issues that are discussed, but because I have no reason to be absent, I have to accept them. Sometimes I accept whatever is discussed because I feel it is in the interest of the students.

Most parents' passive attitude created opportunity for others to parade their interests, an attitude suggestive that there were more powerful others who could make decisions for them. Other parents did not play active roles because of what they perceived as an unacceptable way in which their association was run. Such parents did not raise any objection, but simply discharged their obligations to their children and to the schools. This situation, however, could not auger well for the schools. Through periodic appraisals of PTA activities, school authorities could identify some of the objections raised by parents, because in the long run, if these problems were not effectively addressed, they could be stumbling blocks in the building of strong partnerships between the school, home and the community.

Impact of the Devolution Policy on the Provision of Educational Infrastructure

One objective of the study was to examine the impact of the devolution policy on the educational reform program, and in particular, what educational accomplishments had been made from the perspectives of the key players in education. Yin (1980, p. 114) asserted that in the territorial dispersion of power, the clients may receive better information about services, and they may be able to transact their services on a local basis, but the territorial dispersion of power in itself is no guarantee that clients will have more power over the services that are delivered. As Yin observed, any attempts at improving educational services are supposed to be accomplished through the participation of various educational clients. In their responses, directors, headmasters and teachers indicated that the allocation and disbursement of government funds were the responsibilities of two ministries namely, the Ministries of Education and Finance. As a result of the constraints faced by these two ministries, funds were quite often not released in good time. As noted by one district administrator:

> Funds continue to be held at the top. This is creating problems. Officers travel on official assignments sometimes at their own expense because the money is not readily available.

The point noted from the responses made by directors, headmasters and teachers was that government funds were submitted to the regional director who in turn broke them up for the districts. This bureaucratic structure with the central government issuing funds seemed to raise the expectation the funds were to be derived from the government. It was expected that such funds would not be adequate to meet the educational needs and were therefore to be supplemented by the local communities through extra funds generated locally by the district assemblies. The assemblies, however, were not financially viable as noted by one director:

> . . . many of the district assemblies are not financially viable or strong enough to provide these facilities -- classrooms and furniture. So you see many of our schools with poor facilities. However, the government has been trying to supplement the efforts of these districts, especially those which are in difficult areas -- those who are unable to provide these facilities, especially since the educational reforms started.

It seemed that the assemblies did not have strong influence on the people they were supposed to lead. Ofori (1992, p. 181) wrote:

> The Ghana government says is has achieved [decentralization] with the four years of district assemblies, and the government's claims have been endorsed by the international community, especially Western governments. But an opposite view is that all political power still resides in Accra, the capital, and little has changed for the majority of the people. . . It was also claimed that decentralization would improve the local government administration because political power and control of resources were to be devolved from the centre to the various districts.

In a nutshell, Ofori argued that the devolution policy had little impact on the provision of resources, and observations from respondents suggest that the situation has not changed much. At the same time, however, the assemblies seemed to have control over district directors such that they (assemblies) could overrule the district director's decision to impose levies. The director was empowered to collect money only for sports and some other learning materials, but not textbooks, for example. Headmasters' administration did not exert much impact, as noted from the following observation from one of them:

> Since everything hinges on finance and we find it very difficult to collect fees from the children, it is difficult to run the school. Also, it is not all parents who are in a position to contribute. Even payment of school fees is a problem.

The Ministry's continued control over finance, the assemblies' continued control over the director, and the director's continued control over the school head meant that bureaucratic control was still strong. Thus Ghana's regulatory and allocative functions seem to be exercised in rather central ways even under the current policy of decentralization. This practice is at variance with Byrne's (1974) suggestion that schools in poverty areas require special care if they are to be brought up to the conditions of education prevailing in well-established areas. The overall result was that lower levels of administrators who were supposed to generate resources locally were unable to do so. They would therefore continue to look up to the government. Yet, as Hill (1988) suggested, it would be beneficial to establish a scheme that would ensure that parents and the community knew on what basis the available resources were distributed in their area and how much was being spent on each school. In the light of these developments, it has been difficult to involve the people. Although poverty among the local people was often cited as one major impediment to the provision of resources, the ineffectiveness of local government administrators seems to be a stronger debilitating force in resource mobilization.

On the positive side, it may be argued that there has been some positive impact from the perspectives of some of the key partners. The central government continues to exercise national control, and has been able to attract foreign donors as a result of the policy. Generally, however, key players at the local level have not played any significant role as expected of them. This situation calls for new approaches to be adopted. These approaches should obviously include financial decentralization under which the bulk of the required funds would be released periodically -- for example, quarterly grants, and in good time too. Measures must also be instituted to ensure accountability in the use of local funds.

Improving Resource Provision Through Current Partnerships

The primary goal of the devolution policy was to facilitate the mobilization of resources for social services including education. The central government, as in all times, has been the major provider for education. Since its maximum efforts have not been adequate to provide the required resources at any time, devolution was adopted as a strategy to involve other partners to supplement government's efforts. The achievements resulting from these joint efforts to provide education resources are therefore useful to consider. At the time of the research, visible partners involved in the resource provision to supplement government's efforts were the district assemblies, parent-teacher associations, the local communities, the schools and foreign agencies. The discussion below focuses on the efforts of these partners.

The Central Government's Provisions

The Central Government is responsible for financing over twenty-five sectors of the economy. Five of these sectors are of such strategic importance that they require priority in resource allocation. These sectors are (1) Food and Agriculture, (2) Education, (3) Health, (4) Roads and Highways, and (5) Works and Housing. Of these five service sectors, education stands out as the most expensive to provide. Hence, it is hard for the central government to contain all the costs. Other institutions are obviously required to supplement the costs.

Interviewees differed in their perceptions of the efforts of the various institutions providing resources for education. On the part of the central government as a major provider, headquarters directors felt that the central government was doing its best within the economic constraints facing the country. District directors expressed different views about what the government was providing. While some directors thought the government was doing well, others said although the government was doing its best, its best was not enough. Yet other directors felt the government was not providing enough resources. These different views suggest, of course, that there were inequalities in the provision of resources among the districts.

An assessment of government's efforts suggests that it will be hard for it to provide beyond its current provisions. The government makes annual provisions for recurrent and capital expenditures for education. As respondents noted, apart from the payment of salaries of all personnel in public education, the government has also undertaken to provide textbooks, stationery, technical equipment and other learning materials to all public schools and to some extent, private schools. In its capital expenditure, the government has also introduced PAMSCAD [Program of Action for Mitigating the Social Cost of Adjustment] through which it provides financial assistance to some of the very poor communities to undertake educational projects including school buildings, laboratories and workshops. For example, the government provides roofing sheets for some of these school projects. It was, however, observed that some projects could not be completed because no additional government funds were provided. The government also provided five percent of the "national cake" to the district assemblies towards development projects. In addition, the government provides scholarships to deserving students for internal and overseas studies. The government's provision is reflected in the comment of one parent who said:

> The central government has been doing quite well in the sense that judging from the economy of the state and the fact that the government has taken it upon itself to establish so many schools throughout the length and breadth of the country, the resources are unable to meet the demands of the schools.

In spite of the efforts on the part of the central government, the overall picture in the minds of some respondents, was not positive. For example, although school-based administrators and teachers generally acknowledged that the government was making good efforts, they were not satisfied with what the government had so far provided them, as noted from the following comment:

> The government is paying scholarships, other charges, and maintenance of buildings. We have to submit estimates, make contacts here and there before we get things through. This is rather discouraging. The money we need to operate quite often delays so much. The central government may give approval to a project but getting it through has been a problem.

Thus while a section of the society appears to be getting its due share of the resources for education, others may still complain. Lyons (1985) noted that with regard to equity, those who control at the centre frequently neglect the periphery, because knowledge about its special requirements may not be available. Moreover, at the centre the political claims of those who are closer to the Minister or whose pressures are more powerful command more urgent attention. Thus it may be argued that schools closer to the centre or more advantageously placed, could be those who expressed satisfaction with the government's provisions. For example, one headmaster noted that funds allocated to one school could later be diverted to another school. Three headquarters directors observed that the central government devoted over 40 percent of the total national budget to education. Considering the various sectors of the economy, this figure gives the impression that the government could not be asked to do more. Yet this huge expenditure is hardly reflected in many of the schools because such schools did not obtain adequate resources for learning and teaching. One explanation was that the bulk of the government's funds went into the payment of salaries of all personnel in the entire public educational system. Salaries have been the largest item of expenditure, according to one director, because education is labour intensive. And although salaries form the largest item of expenditure in education, this is hardly recognized when assessing government's provisions. The government's provisions have largely been assessed in terms of such non-human resources as the school building and all that goes into it. Since these were easily identified as inadequate, and since the primary responsibility was that of the government, it was quite easy to request the government to provide more. As noted already, the government had undertaken to provide all textbooks, stationery, tools, etc. to all schools, and was doing that, yet the tendency to call on the government to provide sufficient quantities was great. Since this expectation is not economically feasible, the option now is to motivate others to assist.

Hartman (1988) observed that rarely does an administrator find that the financial resources are adequate to perform the many tasks that he or she would like to accomplish. This situation calls for assistance from other quarters. However, some of the economic measures adopted by the government itself seem to make it difficult for others to assist. For example, a number of respondents said they were prepared to purchase materials for their children to supplement government's efforts, but for the fact these materials were largely unavailable in the open market. They therefore called on the government to take whatever steps deemed feasible to make the materials available in the market. For example, the government could review its sales tax and import duty laws on textbook production to encourage textbook importers and producers to produce more textbooks at reasonable cost. The lack of educational resources was one major reason for the introduction of the devolution policy through which other strategies might be adopted to provide more resources. These strategies imply the invitation and motivation of other identifiable organizations to provide more resources. While it seems quite simple to assess the government's efforts, it is not easy to assess what other partners were doing in terms of resource provisions. However, the point that the government's maximum efforts did not adequately meet the demands of education makes it clear that current efforts require to be appraised.

The District Assemblies' Provisions

Under their current administrative structure, the district assemblies could be described as the next major institution in the provision of resources for education. The government as the initiator of the district assembly concept has taken a number of measures to help them discharge their responsibilities. The PNDC Law 207 of 1988 which established the assemblies expected them to serve as the instruments for community participation in the efforts at providing education. As Siita (1992) stated, community participation and decision-making at the grassroots level form the cornerstone of the District Assembly concept. Law 207 has clarified and legalized community involvement by making the district assemblies a pivot in the provision of services at the local level. There are specific educational functions that the assemblies are expected to discharge including the provision of educational infrastructure. These responsibilities, of course, depend on the assemblies' financial viability. To perform their functions, the assemblies receive transfers as grants-in-aid and "ceded" revenue from the central government. They are also empowered to raise revenues through local taxation to perform their functions.

Within these financial provisions, it has been expected that the assemblies would provide social services as may be required. Most interview responses indicated that, to a large extent, the district assemblies have not performed to the level expected of them. Responses indicated that although the assemblies' financial standing might not be as strong as expected, the provision of social services including education, has been much below expectation. Respondents acknowledged that some transfers of funds from the government had been made, and some local revenues had been obtained. In addition, educational levies had been imposed when necessary. The revenue accruing from these sources might still not be enough suggesting the need to explore other options. For example, as Ofori (1992) remarked, even though the ceded money is collected locally it has to be returned to central government before being reimbursed among local governments. The government has not permitted the direct use of funds collected locally. One director, therefore, suggested the establishment of an "Education Fund" to be initiated by the assemblies.

According to a number of respondents, including one assembly member, educational services provided by the assemblies include bursary awards to needy secondary school students (12 students mentioned), and providing roofing sheets to some schools. However, considering the enormity of educational needs and what the central government had so far provided, the provision made by the assemblies as the next major contributor of resources for education, seems much inadequate. The majority of responses from directors, headmasters, teachers and parents reflected a negative performance in education on the part of the assemblies, as one school administrator and one teacher noted:

> As a resident of [Name of town] I don't know what is going on in the assembly. I know that they have a number of committees, including an education committee, that are responsible for various matters in the district. But I don't really know what is going on. Sometimes I myself remark at some point that I am not seeing much. I haven't seen anything significant that is being done by the assembly. So I myself have some questions to ask.
>
> With regard to the assemblies helping with development projects, in fact, I have seen nothing from them in our school. We have a classroom structure which was started by the former headmaster. This was done with PTA funds and not from the assembly. We haven't got anything from the assembly; we don't even see them.

A university administrator was of the view that the problem of inadequate funding of development projects was more acute in the rural districts than it was in the urban districts. Urban districts were noted to be able to finance development projects more easily. It is therefore a matter of great concern that community schools did not see significant contributions from the assemblies. Consequently, it is not difficult to understand why revenue collectors met opposition in their tax collection. That the assemblies were not living up to their responsibilities is supported by the Auditor General's annual report of 1994 which observed that the assemblies spent only 15 percent of their total revenue on local development projects, and spent 85 percent on administrative expenses. The gross value of the assemblies' revenue is not clear, but whatever they make, the fact that much larger percentage of their revenue is utilized on administration raises questions on their primary responsibilities.

A district budget officer explained that the assemblies sometimes came under pressure from government officials to spend on national events organized locally. This being the case, the government itself seems to bear part of the charge that district assemblies are not living up to their responsibilities. It would therefore be appropriate for the assembly to streamline the organization of such events so that more appropriate methods would be worked out to organize these events. Given the present structure of governance, the assemblies have been placed in a position where they could obtain funds, at least up to some point, to provide services. Their major problem seems to be more of ineffective management skills than inadequate finances. A re-examination of their expenditure policies, therefore, seems very crucial.

The Local Communities' Provisions

Members of the local communities are the primary beneficiaries of educational facilities and services. It should therefore be their primary concern that education is adequately catered for. Such concern is usually expressed by those who are directly utilizing educational facilities and services. However, since education is social good, and parents' resources may not be able to adequately provide all the resources, others members of the community could be asked to make contributions. As noted already, even though the central government has assumed full responsibility for pre-university education, at this stage of the country's development, it is evident that the government cannot shoulder that responsibility totally. Other partners are therefore required to participate, and they need to be encouraged to do so. Having a child or children in school should not be the only basis for individual citizens to make contributions. Yet, as one headmaster observed, members of the local communities have not shown sufficient involvement.

The district assemblies, set up to complement government's efforts, have been unable to meet those expectations. One way of involving others is to ask citizens to make some contributions, but this practice has also raised opposition in some circles. A few headquarters directors, for example, remarked that the government was not happy when the district assemblies or school authorities imposed unapproved levies on the local people. One reason for the government's objection on local levies was the notion that such local levies inflict extra hardships on the people, many of whom were poor. It may be understandable when the government expresses concern about the people's ability to pay, but care must be taken when raising objection to local initiatives for political expediency. It was noted that sometimes the government's stand stemmed from its need to find acceptance with the electorate. What is necessary is for local authorities to assess the economic strengths of their citizens in undertaking development ventures. Quite often, the people's contribution may be due more to how they understand education than their ability to pay for education. Fortunately, citizens' contributions do not always have to be money.

A number of responses showed that citizens' contributions have taken various forms such as communal labour on school projects, repairs in school building, providing and preparing land for school buildings, voluntary cash donations by individual benefactors, and soliciting for funds and materials such as trophies and drugs. Community contributions have sometimes been made through the district assemblies' initiatives, but there was no evidence of regular contributions. Some of the contributions appear impressive, but as the responses suggested, these were done or provided in sporadic manner. They also seemed to depend only on peoples' willingness to do so. Some community education might be necessary. There were no policy guidelines to direct these efforts. In the same manner, individual schools did not have any established procedures within which the community could offer them some assistance. Therefore, while some schools did obtain some assistance, others did not benefit much from community assistance. In particular, boarding schools located outside the communities appeared to live in isolated worlds. Consider, for example, what three headmasters said:

> I think that because this is a boarding institution, and to a large extent is very removed from the town, the people feel that the school does not belong to them; a day school might be different. We made some attempts to involve the community but these have come to naught.
>
> Presently we don't see any participation of the Assisem community in helping the school in any way. At the moment if we are counting on any help from our community, then the only body we can talk of is the PTA.
>
> At times we have some benefactors. The husband of one of my lady teachers is very much interested in the school because its high academic standard. The

> husband works overseas. This year he brought us a radio to be given to the best student, characterwise. This has boosted the ego of the children, and they are doing well. He has promised to bring us more. There is another contractor who is also very helpful to the school. Sometimes he gives us bags of cement to help us in our school renovation. He sometimes gives us money too, and he is very kind to us.

Respondents were of the view that citizens' participation was not merely a question of poverty, but was more the question of lack of civic education. It was, however, observed that many citizens, particularly in the deprived areas, could not help because they did not have jobs and were poor. Such unemployed people, it was suggested, would need government loans to establish themselves to be able to contribute to education. These are issues that could be tackled by the district assemblies. For example, if the assemblies discharged their functions as required of them, the job issue is one problem they would seriously have to consider. The district assemblies would be expected to explore various possibilities of creating jobs for the people. Then through community education, each school community could consider adopting its school as a community school. As previously noted, the assistance that schools require does not always mean money. When, for example, building materials have been provided from other sources, community members could then provide communal labour to save cost.

Parent-Teacher Associations' Provisions

Parent-Teacher Associations' resource provisions have been made primarily by parents. Teachers' contributions have consisted of the identification of school problems for the consideration of the association. Most respondents, particularly school heads and teachers, acknowledged the active role being played by these associations in running their schools. Through PTA levies, the associations have contributed anything from helping to construct school buildings, through the provision of school items like furniture, to various school repairs. It is significant to note that poverty has not blocked members' contributions as noted in the case of non-parents. If parents' economic status does not differ markedly from other citizens, then a question arises why parents try to provide for education but other citizens claim they are unable to do so because they are poor. One headmaster and a teacher noted that their PTA provisions took the following forms:

> A number of things have been done for the school. For example, some dormitories have been modernized and improved for the girls. They have provided furniture, and have made repair of bungalows, toilets, baths, and kitchen. They have also gone out of their way to rent houses for the teachers.

> When any problem arises, we invite the parents and together with the teachers, we find out how best we can solve the problem of the children. I will say that in my school the parents are outstanding towards the development of their children.

As one teacher observed, parents were aware that to depend on the central government to provide everything their school needed would mean stagnation of learning and teaching. For the PTAs there is nothing that cannot be done for their schools once the decision has been made to that effect. It could be argued therefore that in resource provision for education, PTAs stand as stronger partners than do the district assemblies. For example, while many teachers and parents said they did not see any educational contribution from the assemblies, everyone of them acknowledged some contributions from the PTAs. This confirms the observation made earlier that, in helping the schools, commitment is a stronger factor than the ability to contribute. From the responses, it is also gratifying to observe that PTA funds have generally been put to their intended purposes. One explanation may be that PTA funds are operated by a committee outside the school's control. Individual heads of school do not have control over the use of such funds. This may be one factor that encourages members to pay any contributions.

The Individual School's Provisions

While efforts are constantly being made by institutions and organizations to meet the needs of schools, schools need to realize such efforts put together are unlikely to meet their needs adequately. No resource contribution towards education is too small to be counted out. Therefore some efforts on the schools' part to generate additional resources without jeopardizing their primary role of teaching and learning would beneficial and advisable. Rensburg (1984) suggests that depending on the community's mainstream economy, a school can undertake an endless number possible activities noting that:

> Schools can be involved in public works, their own buildings and equipment, in clinics, water reticulation, roads, building of libraries and offices, and other public facilities. They can be involved in soil conservation and land reclamation and improvement. They can make parks and playgrounds and build early childhood education and day-care centres. They can take part in afforestation scheme. They can be involved in constructing and looking after museums. They can help to set up recreation centres. They can take part in public housing construction schemes. (p. 249)

The establishment school fund is particularly necessary for primary and junior secondary schools who do not receive government quarterly grants. Senior secondary schools, particularly the boarding ones, usually meet some of their daily financial requirements through government's subventions, PTAs, and other organizations such as past students associations. Although, as some heads noted, the total proceeds from such activities were usually not much, they could still meet some of the schools' daily expenses without waiting for funds from outside sources.

Responses show that fund raising activities differed from school to school because there was no official policy to guide schools in raising funds. According to respondents, schools were permitted to undertake some activities to raise funds. This practice is understandable under the devolution policy. Therefore, individual schools undertook any activities they thought were appropriate. These activities include farming, crafts making, repairs of automobile and other electrical appliances, carrying stones or sand, cracking palm kernel to sell, and silver collection during school worship. Proceeds from these activities go into the school fund, the only funds over which heads of schools have complete control. It was observed that an additional PTA contribution of ¢100 per students is made towards the fund.

Schools' efforts to generate additional funds have, however, sometimes been questioned from certain quarters, particularly by parents of elementary school children who often interpret such activities as waste of learning time of the students. For example, one director remarked that although such fund raising activities are officially approved, they should be undertaken after school hours. One headmaster also said:

> Formerly we were issuing out cards to the students to solicit money from the community. But parents were complaining that it was wasting their children's time and so agitated against the operation.

Adult students in technical schools, however, could undertake activities such as automobile repair and building construction to raise funds for their schools.

One headmaster explained that school activities were undertaken only after permission had been granted by the district director. Other heads said they were free to do anything they thought fit. "A stitch in time saves nine," and schools can not always expect funds from outside. Hence although such funds may seem meager, they enable school-based administrators to make, for example, quick minor repairs which cost little and which if delayed, may later cost more to repair. Odden (1992b) emphasized that even when the outcome goals are set at the top of the system -- at the national, state, and district levels -- schools need to be given responsibility for accomplishing those goals. School heads should, however, be strictly accountable in the use of such funds.

Foreign Agencies' Provisions

Respondents acknowledged the active support being provided by a number of foreign agencies towards education in various ways. The agencies mentioned include the International Development Agency (IDA), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the World Bank, African Development Bank, Norwegian Fund, and World Vision International. Funds from these organizations were either loans or grants. The support took the form of providing funds to improve primary, secondary and technical education, putting up facilities such as school buildings, pavilions, and staff quarters. One director noted:

> As regards contributions from other circles, I know that recently the African Development Bank (ADB) has come in to help the poor areas where community members cannot build their own schools, e.g. Mampong and Nyakrom. These communities are very poor so the ADB is putting up school buildings for them.

The availability of funds from foreign non-governmental organizations has been one contributing factor to the success of the reform program. The World Bank, for example, has provided about $400 million constituting about 15 percent of the total expenditure made on the reforms. With the assistance of USAID, an experimental program has been mounted to improve conditions in the primary schools. These agencies have helped to set up a local organization, PAMSCAD [Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment] to offer help to some of the poor communities complete their school projects.

One teacher pointed out that without foreign loans, the junior secondary school program would not have taken off. Respondents therefore expressed the view that educational planners and policy makers would not only accept such funds but would actively seek more support from other willing international organizations. While there was general support for loans and educational grants, the suggestion was that loans should be accepted under conditions that would not create hardships for the country. Some argued that too many loans would be piling up heavy debts for future generations. If favourable conditions are not worked out, especially with regard to the loan repayment, in the long run repayment of the loans would inflict economic hardships on the country. If such a situation arises, the purpose of the loan would be defeated in the long run.

Private Contributions

The contributions by private individuals and organizations such as companies and churches were acknowledged by respondents as significant and essential. Private provisions were consistent with the open market systems operating throughout the world, and is a constitutional right. However, private contributions should be seen as supplementary to what the state is able to private as the major provider. Private education, as noted from the responses, had its positive as well as negative sides. Although private educational institutions have been criticized on some of their practices, it appears that no law can be promulgated to block their operations since some individual citizens simply prefer to use that facility. Rather laws may be made to help them run efficiently.

From the interviews, a number of criticisms were levelled against private schools. For example, they emphasized profit-making thus creating a price barrier to others who may also wish to use their facilities, pursued a narrow curriculum at the expense of broad-based education, were basically examination oriented, and they usually employed low-qualified teachers. At the same time, however, private schools were commended for their perceived high quality education as compared to public school education. Respondents mentioned a number of factors that accounted for the high quality private education. These include stringent and consistent supervision by proprietors, the teachers' job being contingent only upon their continued effectiveness, and parents being committed to providing their school's needs. Therefore, despite the notion that teachers are less qualified, they are noted for examination successes for most users, as their ultimate goal. Consequently, private schools continue to pose a serious challenge to public schools. On the question of teacher qualification, it was observed that some government trained teachers are seconded to teach in private schools for a specified period. They also benefit from the government's supply of free textbooks. One possible option open is to encourage the private schools under the policy guidelines of the Ministry of Education. It has been clear that the government's resources cannot cater for youth adequately. However, since the government retains the ultimate responsibility for educating its citizens, some limitation can be placed on their fees, and their curriculum carefully monitored through the Private Education Unit of the Ministry of Education. Goodman (1988) posed the question, "What can be done to assure adequate resources for public education in the future?" In an answer to this important question, Goodman suggested that all levels of government, business and industry, higher education, and enlightened citizens have major roles to play to assure adequate resources for public schools.

Sharing Educational Costs Between the Government and the Communities

Various internal and external institutions and organizations, as noted in the previous section, are providing resources for education. Many such provisions are only supplementary and may not be relied upon as regular sources of funds. Therefore the two principal partners, the central government and the local communities, should bear the primary responsibility of providing for education. One concern is how this burden could properly be shared between the central government and the communities.

It has been observed that the government's contribution to education from the national budget rose up to an all time high percentage of 40.7 in 1994. This percentage had not been much less in the previous years. The high percentage means that the government's provision has been stretched to a limit where it might not be feasible to extend it any further. One headmaster, for example, noted:

> For education financing, even though the government is doing quite well, we expect more. To achieve maximum results we expect more. For assistance to the schools we expect the government to provide more funds to improve the technical and vocational aspects of the reforms. For example, some children have come to the school seeking admission here. We don't have enough furniture for their use; and it is a problem. The entire furniture which the Council provided has broken down. If you ask individual parents to provide furniture for their wards to sit on while in the school, only a few parents can afford to provide that.

It is in the same vein that a public relations officer observed that the government was trying to do its best, but its best was not enough, and should provide more funds to the provision of facilities. Most respondents held similar views. One respondent was of the view that the central government should bear the entire one hundred percent of the cost of basic and secondary education. However, as the Minister of Finance (1994) pointed out, only a substantial increase in the country's resources would ensure that other sector ministries in the economy were not crowded out. Payment of workers' salaries, for example, was one huge item of expenditure over which the government itself had not much control, unless jobs were cut. There is therefore, a need to explore other avenues for additional funds, and the community has always been a target. One obvious option is to ask community members to supplement. Yet, according to the majority of respondents, poverty has been one reason for the inability of the beneficiaries of education to supplement. There is a need to draw a line between the government's inability to go further and the people's inability to pay more.

Burrup, Brimley, Jr. and Garfield (1988, p. 133) observed that the question of the degree or extent of power local districts should have in the control of their own fiscal operations has been controversial and unsettled. Respondents noted that when the reform program started, the communities were enthused about the program, and worked hard towards various community projects. The original enthusiasm started diminishing at some stage. While the people provided communal labour on social amenities, the district assembly did not appear able to provide the required communal leadership. Out of their enthusiasm, the people originally did not only provide communal labour, but also made monetary contributions with the understanding that the proceeds would count towards the provision of resources. At some point, however, it became evident that the assemblies' revenue was largely utilized on administrative expenses. Some projects which had been started with zeal came to a halt. Naturally the people's enthusiasm would wane. Consequently, the assemblies, as elected representatives, need to examine their social programs, set up new priorities with regard to local development, and take more effective measures to implement them.

As regard the division of the burden of education finance, it may not be feasible to determine that in absolute percentage terms. Moreover, evidence from the interviews suggests that the central government has accepted financing of pre-university education as its primary responsibility, and respondents generally agreed that that is the way it ought to be. What is still controversial is how much contribution could reasonably be made by the members at the local level. There is a need to examine the district assemblies' operations and how they can provide effective leadership in the local communities. The problem of leadership and community education, if effectively provided, may be one important step in the provision of educational resources.

Accessibility of Resources for Educational Programs

The discussion has focused on the operation of the devolution policy and how various institutions and organizations as partners, are providing the resources for education. A logical question that arises is the impact which these efforts have had on the promotion of education. Knight (1983) pointed out that schools do not really have a policy relating to their own costs and finance. They do not have a well developed set of policies, as they do, for example, in relation to examinations, discipline or pastoral care. All they have are a few policies mainly revolving around capitation, for example, for allocation, placing orders, purchasing, storage, inventory control, with perhaps some exhortation about general economies. One objective of the study was to determine the flow of resources, particularly as observed by district directors of education, school-based administrators and teachers. It was also important not only to determine the flow of resources, but also examine some of the options to increase resources.

Resources for Various Educational Programs

Thomas, Kemmerer, and Monk (1982), asserted that the allocation of resources is a central function of the decision-making systems which are designed to facilitate learning. Responses from district directors indicated that there were inequalities in the resources available for school programs in the various school districts. Even though funds allocated annually to education from the national budget had been increasing over the years, this annual increase did not necessarily reflect in the resources obtained in the districts, as noted from the responses from directors and headmasters. Resources in the context of this study did not include salaries since salary matters were determined nationally by the Ministry of Finance in consultation with the Ministry of Education. Once the appointment of staff had been made according to local needs and with the approval of the Ministry, salaries were determined according to their experience and qualifications under the civil service regulations.

The central philosophy underlying local finance management, according to Howard (1988), is the devolution of decision-making about a school's business to local managers. And obviously such delegation embraces processes and elements which are more wide-ranging than simply finance. Directors and school heads had little control over educational these issues. The resources over which school administrators had some control were referred to in the interviews. These include educational infrastructure such as school buildings, staff quarters, equipped workshops and laboratories, and libraries. They also include subventions for daily school expenses, textbooks and stationery. Directors and headmasters expressed different views with respect to the flow of these resources. One major point made was that under the devolution policy, financial decisions were still largely centralized in Accra, the national headquarters. Funds were released only when convenient to the allocating ministry, not necessarily when they were required. Some funds were also expected from fees collected at the school level. These fees required approval of the district director in consultation with the district assemblies, or even headquarters in some instances. Some district directors and school heads were of the view that the supply of resources to their school jurisdiction was good and had remained constant over the previous five years. Some school heads said that the resource situation was originally not satisfactory, but had been improving. Yet, for other heads, the situation had remained problematic all the time. The point is that even if school resources had increased in real terms, unless there was a significant increase, the rise in school enrollment was more likely to neutralize such increases. And the fact that the government had taken on the sole responsibility to supply school materials caused some citizens to raise objection if they were called upon to make any contributions. These views are illustrated from the following three observations by school heads:

> Resource flow in the school has been increasing over the past few years. For example, formerly the PTA paid ¢200 per pupil to make furniture for the school. This year they are paying ¢2,500. This money is used to provide furniture at our carpentry workshop. This has helped to provide the school with a uniform furniture.
>
> Our resources have been fluctuating. The powers that be, when they see that there is something sinister (pressure) in the offing, then they sort of squeeze something there and then to help. Then they relax when they see that the problem has been solved. We are facing financial constraints and the government itself is unable to cope with the demands made on it. For example, the government decided to help us complete our building complex. This wasn't done, and this year it has been put in the budget again.
>
> We know that the tools supplied are not sufficient, but the general assumption is that the government will bring more. Since 1987 when we had the very first supply, there have been no more supplies. Some of the first supply have broken down, some have been lost, but we have not been replacing them.

It is evident from the responses that in many cases, schools may run short of simple materials like chalk, pencils and card boards. Lack of funds to purchase these materials may mean that schools could go on for weeks or even months without any meaningful learning. Therefore, citizens could be called upon to make some contributions and the assemblies were in a position to determine what reasonable amount could be contributed by individual citizens. As one respondent observed, citizens' ability to make some affordable contributions to education was due more to lack of understanding and commitment than to poverty. With some community education, citizens were more likely to feel committed to make such contributions. Of course, those citizens who genuinely would not be able to make such contributions could be identified and treated as appropriate.

One goal of the new program was the acquisition of practical skills. Such skills could not be acquired without the necessary tools. Technical tools were seriously lacking. In some schools, tools supplied were also not utilized because qualified teachers were lacking. In many schools the tools were inadequate, and further supplies had been highly irregular. It was observed that such tools were supplied only once in six years. Some schools packed their tools in some insecure locations and so tools were being lost through thefts. The schools had originally been supplied with watchmen (security personnel) to take charge of school property, including tools. However, according to some respondents, these security men were later withdrawn. Heads of school spoke against such withdrawal. To reduce costs, one security person could have been assigned to patrol a number of schools. It has been pointed out the central government has the primary responsibility for education, yet because its maximum efforts still do not adequately meet the requirements of education, the debate on what other options to take to obtain adequate resources, or at least improve the current resources continues. A number of options to improve resource provisions are open for examination. Some of these options are the subject for discussion in the next sections.

The Option to Increase User Fees

User fees include the money which students pay to support the provision of school materials, particularly textbooks and stationery. Tuition in public schools is free, as indeed it is even at the university level. The supply of learning materials is basically a responsibility of the central government. As responses indicated, the quantity of textbooks supplied has not been enough to supply one textbook to one student. Moreover, in order to prolong the life span of the books, textbooks are usually retained in the school. Students cannot take them home, meaning that they have no chance of doing home studies, unless they obtain copies privately.

In order to obtain sufficient textbooks and other materials, asking pupils to pay more towards textbook purchase is one option. User fees, according to some respondents, currently are paid into a textbook revolving fund which are utilized to obtain more books. Respondents were generally in agreement that the textbook fees at the current level are inadequate. Hence there is some justification for an increase to generate additional funds to what the central government is providing. As Eicher (1984, p. 92) noted, one should expect the quality of education provided in a given school to be affected by the ability of the school principal to raise local resources (when he or she is free to do so) and to use them for improving the quality of physical facilities by his or her ability to organize the time schedule of the various streams, to develop the enthusiasm of teachers and of students.

While there was consensus that the fees are too low, respondents differed in their views on the option to increase such fees. It was observed that even though the fees were low, certain factors do not support any increase. One headmaster felt that the fee question had political implications in the sense that although the government realized that such increase was quite appropriate, it has always ruled against it because it would render the government unpopular with the electorate. The other reason given was that most parents were too poor to afford the fees even as they now stand, and therefore, they might withdraw their children from school if the fees were increased. At the moment some students are unable to pay anything, a situation which compels some headmasters to pay for them. Such students are retained in school because their withdrawal from school would be unconstitutional since education is a constitutional right.

Some parents felt that they were in a position to buy books and materials from the market. The problem, however, was that the books were not available in the local book stores. The government could therefore relieve itself part of the burden if the books were available for those who were prepared to buy. If some students possessed their own copies, then the few copies supplied would be available for others. If the government's funds were inadequate, then through other appropriate means, it could ensure that textbooks and other materials were available in the stores. Overall, respondents did not think increasing textbook user fees was a viable option. The establishment of a district endowment fund appeared to be a better option.

The Establishment of a District Endowment Fund

The establishment of a district endowment fund is an option that many respondents would support. The basic assumption underlying the fund is that education is a social good and the child is the property of the state. Therefore the child's pre-university education should be a collective responsibility of the community, and a common fund is one measure to provide that education. Therefore, as suggested by some respondents, the fund should not be tied to the child, a situation that would impose social burden on only those who have children in school. The district assemblies were expected to play a leading role in the establishment of the fund. Since they have already been levying the citizens for social programs, part of such revenue could be used to establish an education fund for their districts. An appeal could also be made to institutions and organizations considered as deriving manpower from education to contribute. Some inducement measures could be taken to enable these organizations to make contributions. In the interest of educational development, every worker in the community could also be encouraged to make regular minimal contributions. The logistics for this fund would have to be carefully worked out so that once it has been established, it could thrive. For example, as Boyd-Barrett (1976) suggested:

> Factors that may facilitate greater parental motivation and success in fund-raising include: a homogenous 'neighbourhood' catchment area, where many of the parents may also have been ex-pupils, and where there is high community identification with the school; a relatively affluent parent body; an emotive single-issue campaign with respect to a particular and badly-needed item of equipment; a strong reputation in certain out-of-school activities which are traditionally supported, in part, by voluntary funds. (p. 39)

One headmaster noted that an attempt had been made previously to establish a fund of this nature. However, some heads realized later that only some schools were benefitting from it. Contributions to the fund therefore slowed down until they stopped entirely. This problem suggests that equitable use of the endowment fund would have to be properly worked out.

Establishing a Loan Scheme for Second Cycle Education

The loan scheme for education is a relatively new strategy introduced in tertiary institutions to help students pay for their education, particularly university education. In the second cycle institutions, tuition has always been free, but users of boarding facilities have to pay for boarding and other fees. These fees have been quite high for many parents who enroll their children in boarding schools. Although such fees are supposed to be paid per term, many parents are unable to do so, and many of them enter into agreements with the school heads to pay the fees in monthly installments. One parent who was not making enough income suggested the establishment of a loan scheme to help parents pay their children's fees. The loan would then be repaid according to some agreement. A question therefore arose regarding the feasibility of such a scheme for secondary education. Tilak (1989) observed that universal secondary education is a very distant goal for many developing countries and that the quality of education in these countries has been lamentable. Accordingly, Tilak suggested that the need for a search for alternative methods of financing education is growing in importance. A loan scheme is one alternative method.

Although it was observed that paying fees was a problem for many parents, some respondents did not think a loan scheme for users would be a good option. One headquarters director, for example, felt that the fees currently paid in senior secondary schools were not too high as to pose serious problems for parents. It would therefore create more problems for the government if secondary school students also received loans. One explanation was that a student's loan at the tertiary level attracted an interest of about 27 percent. The student paid only three percent. The bulk of the interest was paid by the government. It would, therefore, not be advisable to expand the problem.

Opinions on the scheme were, however, divided among school heads and other respondents. Two headmasters felt that the scheme would be a laudable idea to support parents, but one respondent felt that the scheme would be suitable only for those who earned regular income, not for farmers, for example, whose incomes were highly irregular and depended on the vagaries of the weather. One headmaster of a boarding school which largely depended on students' fees did not support the scheme, because he felt it would cause problems for the government. Parents would most probably regard the loan as a relieving measure, even if temporary, and would avail themselves of the opportunity, but repayment might ultimately be a problem for them. One teacher was very emphatic in his objection against the scheme, because it was an established system meant to help pay for university education.

It was observed that students required loans to pay for their university education. Therefore, if such students took loans at the secondary school level, those who would continue their education at the university would already be owing. Other students, as pointed out, might even drop out from secondary school, thus leaving the burden of repayment to whoever negotiated the loan agreement. However, other interviewees including a community leader and a public relations officer, thought the scheme would be a good idea to introduce. Overall, in view of the reasons provided against the scheme, it might not be a feasible option to pursue.

Accountability in the Use of Educational Resources

The effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources by those to whom they were entrusted was one of the concerns of the study. Accountability means that schools can demonstrate that they are operating in conformance with state statutes, using state funds as intended, and improving the performance of students in accordance with state goals (Rossmiller, 1982). Trustees of educational resources included directors, school heads, teachers, and PTA executives. Many directors emphasized that funds were utilized as intended. There were no instances of misappropriation, misapplication, or embezzlement of funds. It would indeed be expected that funds received from various sources, already inadequate, would be judiciously used and that maximum benefits would be derived from them. Heads of school expressed similar views on the use of funds. The following comments from a public relations officer, and one headmaster illustrate the situation:

> In this district, as far as I know, we have not come across any waste of funds as such. Funds are released to the heads of departments and the district assemblies. They usually supervise school projects and they have to see to it that these things are well done. If there has been any misuse of funds, well that has not come to my notice.
>
> Most of our funds are normally channelled through the district office. We have observed that expenditure in the school is becoming higher than the income. This is how I see it. The government has to bring in more money, but whatever comes into our hands is used judiciously.

As Jordan and Lyons (1992) pointed out, while few question the need for accountability, many question how to achieve it. PTA funds, for example, were carefully spent after items of expenditure had been approved at a PTA meeting. Such funds were administered by an executive committee who released money to the school authorities. No one person had exclusive control of the funds. The head and staff of a school were normally required to bring any item of expenditure before the PTA for discussion. However, while many heads said funds were effectively used, one of them cited some instances of embezzlement by other school heads. The headmaster explained that some heads did not deposit fees into government's chest as required by law, and so embargo had been placed on their salaries. According to the headmaster, heads used school funds for private purposes because of economic hardships, an explanation that would not be accepted as valid. Overall, the impression was that most school heads remained accountable for resources they received from any source.

Cost-Effectiveness of Education

Closely related to the issue of accountability is the level of returns realized from educational investments. The general notion was that although some achievements have been made, they were not adequate considering the huge investments made over the years. Education had not been totally effective because of a number of limiting factors. Rossmiller (1982, p. 90) suggested that at the state and school district level, the application of cost-effectiveness techniques may improve productivity in such ancillary services as transportation, feeding, and housing of students. As one director noted, one major factor in Ghana's system was ineffective supervision by school heads. For example, weak supervision gave teachers some leeway to engage in other ventures instead of focusing on teaching. Teachers' divided attention was, however, the result of poor service conditions, suggesting that teachers' conditions of service is an important issue to address. It is significant, however, to remark that many private schools have less qualified teachers whose economic situation may not be any better than teachers in public schools. Yet, responses on private education indicated that student achievements in private schools were of a higher standard.

Another observation was that education has not provided school graduates with the requisite job skills. According to one university professor, however, education is a costly venture and is not truly subject to cost benefit analysis, since benefits are not easy to quantify. Education provides individual and social benefits which also vary, and every person who passes through an education system certainly derives some benefits. The notion that the beneficiary becomes an enlightened individual in many aspects of social life is an important factor to consider. However, it is also necessary to realize that a major goal of schooling is to provide people with skills. Therefore, when beneficiaries do not acquire the skills they need as a result of which they become virtually unemployable youths, then cost-effectiveness of education is called into question. This situation is quite evident from those who have passed through the primary and secondary school systems. Hence, what needs to be done to make primary and secondary education useful is to provide graduates with further training.

A third factor mentioned was poor initial planning resulting in wastage of scarce resources. As a result of poor planning, it was costing the nation 200 percent of what would normally be spent on education. For example, there is a waste in the use of human resources, particularly in the regional and district education offices. An instance is where seventeen senior officers are currently doing the work formerly done by four officers. Thus the fact that over 80 percent of the total education budget is allocated to salaries does not necessarily reflect the level of input in education. Personnel management is therefore one major area to examine critically. Placement of teachers has also not been efficiently executed. As a regional budget officer indicated, "we tend to have lop-sided placement where the most qualified teachers are posted to the urban centres with many of them not doing much." Hence, there is a need to ensure that qualified personnel are placed in areas where they would attain their maximum potential. Highly skilled and semi-skilled employees should be placed where there is work for them to do.

A fourth factor is that too much emphasis has been placed on university education. This implies less emphasis on basic and secondary education. The situation does not reflect the national policy that purports to make basic and secondary education a top priority. This priority must be reflected in the amount of resources allocated to a student at the lower level.

Finally, there has been a gap between theory and practice. For example, in order to ensure effective spending in secondary schools, the national policy stipulates that board of governors should be responsible for spending in secondary schools. In practice, however, individual heads hold that responsibility in their respective schools. One officer observed that lapses were most likely to occur where the entire spending decisions were left in the hands of one person. As a solution therefore, the officer suggested:

> I believe we should reinforce that policy: Board of Governors should take control of school finances even though they may not do this on day-to-day basis. If that is done one major bottleneck will be removed.

Weaknesses in Financial Practices

It is imperative for spending officers to examine constantly the flow and use of funds. In this connection, education personnel including directors, heads of institutions, teachers, budget officers and accountants have a primary responsibility to ensure the efficient use of funds. A number of on-going practices were identified as weaknesses. Knight (1983) referred to a number of questions that schools should constantly ask. These questions include: (1) Can we make economies in the total running of the school? (2) Can we get better value for money within the total costs of the school? (3) Is the balance of cost structure right? and (4) What constraints could be modified to make better use of our financial resources? By constantly asking these questions, and diligently seraching for true answers to them, schools would be addressing some of the weaknesses that confront them.

First, as already pointed out, financial decisions are still centralized at the national capital, Accra, a factor that has strong implications for the reform program. School heads look up to the district director and the PTA for authority to implement financial decisions they may make. District directors, in turn, look up to the district assemblies and to the central government, through the regional director for approval of many of their decisions. The district assemblies themselves look up to the government for the bulk of their operating funds. Therefore, the financial system has not undergone much change, as a regional budget officer noted:

> In any system where financial decision is made at the headquarters and is not very close to the level of expenditure itself we tend to have wastage along the line. The farther the financial decision is removed from the level of implementation, the higher the wastage. It should be possible for local communities to take major decisions on education financing. If this is done the question about accessibility, administrative and quality of education will all be addressed.

Second, there have been insufficient funds for virtually every aspect of education. A major goal of the devolution policy was to generate more funds for the reform program in education. Years after introducing the reform program, some improvement would be expected in terms of increased funds for educational programs. However, participants' comments indicate that most educational programs are still underfunded. Perhaps adequate funding for education programs is a long term goal that may not be realized at this stage. Yet, the evidence that many programs are underfunded suggests a need for frequent appraisals of the reform measures to provide for education. One weakness observed is that funds allocated for institutions are not released when they are actually needed thus slowing down educational programs.

For the secondary schools, an important source of funds is the various fees students are expected to pay. The schools depend on these fees at a time when government's funds have not been released. Collection of fees is, however, fraught with many problems, including parents' inability to pay on time, and students' tendency to pocket fees when they receive the funds from their parents. This practice tends to create tension between school authorities on one hand, and parents and students on the other. Heads sometimes make a written agreement with parents who may opt to pay fees in installments. Once such agreements have been concluded, parents could be asked to make direct payment to the school, particularly in cases where students falter in submitting payments to the school.

Third, the problem of inadequacy of funds is exacerbated by embezzlement on the part of some school officers. One director observed that as a result of weak supervision, accountants in secondary schools and teacher training colleges are able to embezzle or misapply funds. The director noted that such weaknesses were difficult to eliminate entirely, and the best that could be done was to minimize it. At a time when efforts are being made to generate more resources for education for the benefit of all, embezzlement and misapplication by responsible officers should be viewed as two of the major weaknesses afflicting the system, and a matter of serious concern. One officer observed that school heads are sometimes forced by circumstances to misapply funds. This is a situation where funds allocated for a specific item are diverted to another item. For example, library funds may be used for fuelling which may seem more urgent. In such circumstances, misapplication by heads may be justified, but it points out the need for funds to be released at the appropriate time to ensure smooth administration. There is also a need to make accountants aware of their responsibility towards the current drive for adequate resources in a period of scarcity. Embezzlement and misapplication of funds are unwholesome practices that could stop any move regarding school-based budgeting. The Ministry of Education could therefore organize period seminars and workshops for headmasters, teachers, budget officers and accountants in educational institutions emphasizing the need to observe ethics in budgeting and accounting practices.

Finally, as one director noted, there is a heavy burden on government created not only by paying salaries to the large number of employees, but also bearing the responsibility of training people. The director felt that the heavy burden could be made lighter if private employers could be invited to provide some training at least to those they wanted to employ. Churches have an important role in this respect by ploughing back some of their proceeds to education.

Provision of Welfare Services

Staff and student welfare services do not appear to receive much attention. Services such as medical care, transportation for staff and students, canteen services, and sports facilities play important roles in learning and teaching. The provision of most of these services, however, seem to be relegated to the background. In a situation where even resources such as textbooks, stationery and learning equipment are in short supply, it may not be too hard to understand why welfare services do not appear to receive attention. The objectives of the educational system make it imperative that these services receive due attention as well. Staff services related to transportation, according to one director, are being catered for through the monthly payment of transport allowance. It was also mentioned that medical care is being catered for through reimbursement of medical expenses for education personnel. However, no district director, school head or teacher mentioned that service, suggesting that the policy may be paper work only, and needs to be examined.

One director at the headquarters said that the Ministry of Education should not be saddled with the provision of these services, a suggestion that the Ministry alone is unable to cope with those services. The suggestion was that the Ministry of Health, for example, could be invited to help to provide medical services to staff and students. A policy to that effect would, however, have to be worked out. In the schools, no policy was in place to provide systematically welfare services to students. If school-based management was effected as a policy, then school heads with their advisory councils, could formulate policies to direct these services. A variety of responses indicated that every school dealt with these services as it thought fit, but there were no policies to that effect. One head, for example, noted:

> I feel that these facilities should be manned by a different entity altogether. They could make profit that way. Also academic work will be improved because the headmaster will concentrate on the academic aspect of the school, and particularly on what is happening in the classroom instead of looking for money and chasing food. I feel these things should be run privately because that way the profit won't come to the school. So it should be government oriented, but the personnel and everything should be controlled by the school.

In the current practices, where heads take decisions with reference to the district director, school heads can still make decisions at the school level once justification can be made for such decisions. Therefore, school heads have a primary responsibility to ensure that some of the services that facilitate school learning are in place.

Distribution of Schools

Schools are the basic infrastructure in the provision of education. Over the past decades, the national goal in education has been the attainment of comprehensive formal education for all citizens. The achievement of this goal, of course, means accessibility to primary and secondary schools for the youth. Good efforts have been made to make schools available in all communities, but the educational reform program requires greater efforts to make more schools available to areas that did not formerly have schools. The current policy, according to one director, is to make schools available within every five-kilometre radius. Responses indicate that positive gains are being made in the establishment of primary schools in all communities. The spread of junior secondary schools was also positive in the sense that all communities that had middle school now have junior secondary schools. Therefore most communities now have junior secondary schools. However, participants indicated that conditions of many schools are not satisfactory, thus making learning and teaching difficult tasks to undertake. They observed that the opening of senior secondary schools was limited because it was most costly to provide, and that for most people, the ability to pay was not good. There is also unequal distribution of senior secondary schools in the districts. For those communities that have no senior secondary schools, or are located far from the nearest secondary school, it is the responsibility of their district assemblies to establish one for them.

However, under the present management and organizational structure of the assemblies, it may not be reasonable to expect them to provide such costly facilities. With careful new expenditure patterns, however, the assemblies may be able to make a start and ask for assistance from other partners. In this connection, community education to create an awareness in the people of their need for schools, will be a positive step to start with. The opening of a senior secondary school is such a costly venture that community education alone may not be sufficient, and would require the joint efforts of all partners with the central government playing a leading role. As some responses showed, the cost involved compelled the government to temporarily halt the opening of new senior secondary schools. It is expected that the ban on the opening of such schools will not be long so as to enable communities located far from the nearest senior secondary schools also to benefit from the facility.

Quality Assessment of the Reform Program

The rationale for the reform program was to obtain maximum quality in basic and secondary education, and consequently improve university education as well. This rationale could be assessed by examining some of the issues of major concern in the program. Improving the educational system did not only imply finding more resources, but also continually appraising and redesigning the various programs offered. In the assessment of these issues as noted from participants' responses, the factors causing problems appear to be more political and ethical than economic. Although the major problems confronting the reform program appear to be economic, they have strong socio-political and ethical undertones. Therefore, addressing the socio-political and ethical concerns may pave the way to tackle effectively the economic concerns. For example, civil servants' commitment to plans and decisions made, their accountability to educational issues, and integrity in the use of scarce funds, teachers' commitment to the code of ethics, may be all that is required to make planned programs successful. In the assessment of the reform programs and their financing, three major areas were used as the bases for assessing the quality of the reform program. These areas are (1) the curriculum of basic and secondary education, (2) outcomes of the implementation of the secondary school programs, and (3) employment prospects for secondary school graduates.

The Curriculum

Directors, school heads and teachers expressed concern about the scope of the curriculum introduced in primary, junior and senior secondary schools. The new program necessitated the designing of new curriculum for all three levels of pre-university schooling. There was virtually a consensus that given the low age of children in the present system, the curriculum was too broad and unwieldy for effective study by the pupils. They could not grasp the curricular contents to any appreciable depth. Closely related to the scope of the curriculum was the need for adequate qualified teachers. The expectation was that before the new curriculum came into use, qualified teachers would be in place to set the program going. However, after several years, trained teachers, especially in the technical and vocational subjects, have been lacking. The facilities required for effective teaching were also lacking.

Heads and teachers referred to several problems including lack of funds, qualified teachers, teaching aids, equipment, and workshops, staff accommodation to attract qualified staff; limited vocational subjects for students to select from in each school; too many subjects in the arts and the humanities while not paying attention to other subjects like religion and civic education. Teachers were required to teach three or four subjects at the same time. This requirement adversely affected their competency in the classroom. Some school heads complained about the policy that required pupils to select from two prescribed vocations only. It was a policy that limited students' choice of subjects based on their interests and aptitudes. Thus the new programs do not seem to be much different from the old ones. The limitation in the choice of vocations may be the result of inadequate human and material resources that would permit a wide range of subjects for students to choose from.

The introduction of many vocations would, of course, require many qualified teachers. Thus the question of adequate teachers needs to be seriously tackled to attain the employment goal of the program. Since a major goal of the new program was to equip students with practical skills, there is a need to emphasize vocational subjects, and possibly reduce arts subjects in line with the objectives of the new program. There were no real shortage of teachers in the arts. Therefore, it was quite easy to observe students study arts subjects in place of practical subjects. This situation demands a re-examination of the curriculum and all that is required to implement it effectively. The attainment of the goals of the new program depends largely on students being offered as much free-will as possible in their choice of subjects. The resource issue should, of course, receive due attention from planners and policy makers.

The Outcome of the Reform Measures

The students' academic achievement is an important factor that determines the success of the new program. Overall, directors, headmasters and teachers were not happy about the level of students' achievement. A few of them, however, thought that a more objective assessment would have led to different conclusions. One yardstick used to assess the program was students' performance in their final examinations. Opinions were divided on how well students performed at the examinations. Some directors felt that it was not fair to use university entrance requirements as the basis to assess students' performance. According to these directors, it was true that relatively few candidates qualified for the university, but a good number of them qualified for other post-secondary institutions. According to one director, it was not right to use one yardstick to measure different things, as noted from the following comment:

> People are saying that the pupils have failed and so on. I don't think that is a fair judgement in the sense that if an assessment of the pupils done through an attainment test, is later reviewed in terms of a placement test, then people are not being fair. One yardstick is being used to measure different things. The senior secondary school exam is supposed to be an attainment test. So if the results are judged in terms of the child's capabilities and that sort of thing, fair enough.

Another director asserted that it was too early to make any fair assessment of the reform program, and that the pupils were being unduly embarrassed on their output. Moreover, according to other heads, the new program took off at the mid-point rather than the foundation at primary class one. This argument was, however, strongly refuted by one director.

These observations have generated some arguments regarding how successful the entire program has been. It is acceptable that university entrance should not be the only yardstick to measure students' success, and that many other candidates qualified for other post-secondary institutions such as teacher training and nurses training colleges and polytechnics. However, care must be taken not to overlook the potential weaknesses and threats confronting the system. These must be identified and addressed. For example, the notion that just over a thousand students out of over 40,000 students qualified for university admission raises questions about the overall quality of the program.

A number of issues raised by respondents support the contention that the program had not been quite successful. It is true that many students qualified for entry into other post-secondary institutions, but these other institutions accept passes that are lower than those required for university entrance. The huge number of low passes suggests that overall, the performance left much room for improvement. That the Ministry had banned the opening of new senior secondary schools, and had set up a committee to review the entire program, is an admission that the program has not been totally successful. Respondents also admitted the problem of unqualified teaching personnel, as well as inadequate learning materials. For example, in many cases the required textbooks arrived only months before students wrote their final examinations. Some teachers felt over-loaded with work, and could hardly cope, especially at a time when teaching aids were lacking. Students were made to study too many subjects at a time when the required textbooks were not available. These developments obviously curtailed teacher effectiveness that would affect the anticipated level of student achievement.

These negative developments must be admitted as weaknesses of the program implementation and effective measures taken to resolve them. Brady (1984) advised that the key to sound evaluation is convincing participants that failure to achieve certain goals or objectives will not be taken as a negative reflection in their performance. Towards this end, it was noted that the Ministry of Education had appointed a review committee to review the entire program, a decision that must be commended. A major concern now is a need for workable policy, as well as the building of strong partnerships among the various institutions and organizations involved with education. Another issue to consider is the placement of graduates of the program.

Placement of Junior and Senior Secondary School Graduates

A primary goal of the new junior and senior secondary school programs is to ensure that graduates fit well into the employment market after graduation. The achievement of that goal, however, depends on the skills that equip them for job placement. The inability of secondary school graduates to achieve academic successes in their final examinations have other implications. Apart from a few who were described as making headway in their acquired jobs, many students passed out of the system without having acquired the intended job skills. Directors observed that the new program did not truly depart from the old program that emphasized book knowledge, hence students could not fit into jobs. This is a major concern because the government sector as the largest employer is not only saturated, but is cutting back jobs in the pursuit of its downsizing policy. The following comment made by one director illustrates the situation:

> As far as I am aware the government has hitherto been the largest employer and this is taking a heavy toll on the national economy, the budget, and so on. The Ghana Education Service's policy is that students from the new program should not expect the government to employ them all, but try to be self-employed as well. Many junior secondary school graduates have to terminate their formal education at the end of the program. A few of them can be selected to continue at the senior secondary school level.

This situation makes it incumbent on educational planners to ensure that the job objective is effectively addressed. According to some respondents, the junior secondary school program was only meant to expose students to the use of tools to accelerate further training. There was a controversy among teachers on whether they were supposed to teach practical skills or simply to introduce pupils to the use of tools. In any case, the tools supplied were either insufficient, were ineffectively used, or were not used at all. However, assuming that the tools were available for students to get exposed to, that meant that by the time they passed out of the junior secondary school, they would not have acquired the skills to undertake any lucrative business. Only a few of junior secondary school graduates were expected to enter senior secondary school or other second cycle institutions for further studies. This observation means that further training programs are required for the vast number of students who would not enter senior secondary school. Yet, no such training or apprenticeship program has so far been designed for junior secondary school graduates. The two-year National Service Scheme established creates only a temporary employment relief for senior secondary school graduates. Indeed, Ghana Drum (1995b, p. 19) commenting on the Scheme, quoted one senior secondary school headmaster as saying:

> Since the senior secondary program covered only three years, its products were normally not equipped enough nor adequately matured to take up jobs of sacrifice in the form of national service.

Therefore, the two-year service obviously cannot be an effective solution to the placement of graduates suggesting the need for further training programs.

Thus, some formidable constraints have prevented the achievement of the goal of acquisition of skills for employment. Major constraints include (1) insufficient funds, (2) inadequate qualified staff and material resources, (3) lack of incentives to attract and retain well-qualified staff, (4) continued emphasis on theoretical instead of practical subjects, (5) a type of education considered irrelevant to societal values, and (6) the existence of a stop-gap between junior secondary school program and practical skill acquisition. These are among the major constraints which require examination. Such an examination would help achieve the goals of the new educational programs as initially planned.

Conclusion

Education is both a private and a social good, but because it has very crucial social implications, there is a need to ensure that all citizens benefit from it, whether they have the means to pay for it or not. National and state or provincial governments generally accept the responsibility to provide education to ensure that educational facilities are extended to all citizens. However, it is also realized that the cost of providing such facilities is so high that no government, no matter how wealthy it may be, is able to honour its obligation to all its citizens single-handedly. The tendency has, therefore, been to seek other partners to complement what governments are able to provide.

The above discussion has focused on the efforts being made in Ghana to provide pre-university education through the government's initiatives. A major strategy adopted has been to introduce a devolution policy within which local citizens could decide on their social needs including education, and how to tap resources to supplement what the government is able to provide. Various structures have been designed to achieve that goal. However, after several years' efforts aimed at providing comprehensive and high quality education, the outcomes have been much below expectation.

Through the literature review and the field study in Ghana, a number of threats and weaknesses have been identified. Some gains have been made, but the overall perception is that the intended goals are far from being achieved. While the government seems committed to providing the funds, such funds have not been adequate; qualified teachers are in dire need; materials such as textbooks, tools and equipment are still in short supply; the scope of the curriculum is hard to manage; students' performance at examination has not been satisfactory; school administrators and teachers have a hard time coping with classroom work; communities, led by their district assemblies, have performed below expectation; foreign agencies have lent significant support to education, but this has not alleviated the need for the citizens to rely on their own resources; above all, the required commitment on the part of senior civil servants to help implement the devolution policy have not been provided. These, and other pressing problems require urgent and strenuous measures to address them.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The government alone cannot foot the bill . . . it is essential that the district assemblies, the local communities, religious groups and private individuals take a more active role in the provision of new school facilities and the maintenance of existing ones.

Ghana Drum (1995b, p. 19)

The purpose of this chapter is to provide conclusions and recommendations related to the central theme and the specific questions that guided the study. The chapter also offers some thoughts on the procedures for implementing the recommendations. Finally the chapter proposes areas for further research that have potential to contribute to the overall purpose of the study.

As indicated in Chapter 1, a major goal of the study was to tap the up-to-date ideas held by key policy makers, educational planners and analysts, administrators and stakeholders at the national and local levels. The data analysis and interpretations led to a number of findings and conclusions. Conclusions were based on one of the study's assumptions that events and relationships perceived to be real by key actors in institutional settings are real in their consequences for the institution and its stakeholders. It was therefore crucial to attend to "personal meaning" in order to attain a deep understanding of the meanings that individual participants attribute to the processes of providing resources for education.

The Central Theme

The study sought to examine the roles of the central government and the local communities in the provision of educational resources under the devolution policy in Ghana. The discussion in the previous chapter focused on this theme. Participants expressed concern over a number of issues related to resource provisions for education and the results of such provisions. Currently, various institutions and organizations are making some efforts to find resources for education. The workings of such partnerships were identified as discussed in Chapters 4,5,6, and 7.

As noted in Chapter 1, the data collection in Ghana was limited to the research period, May to August, 1994. Hence the study findings reflect the perceptions of the participants for the data collection period only, and are subject to change. For example, at the time of field work in Ghana, the Ministry of Education set up an Education Review Committee to examine the education reform program and propose measures to address any concerns in the system. There is a possibility, therefore, that some of the concerns noted in this study might be receiving attention already. However, at the time of writing, events in Ghana suggest that many of the issues raised in this chapter are yet to be addressed.

Addressing the Specific Research Questions

The study proposed to address nine key issues related to the strategies being adopted to provide resources for education. The specific questions were addressed in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7. Conclusions related to the research questions are presented below.

1. *What are the perceptions of policy makers, administrators and stakeholders of the policy under which money and other resources are allocated to schools under the devolution policy?*

The study involved interviews with a wide variety of participants. These included headquarters directors, regional and district directors of education, assistant directors, headmasters and mistresses, teachers, parents, community leaders, budget officers, a public relations officer, assembly members, and university administrators.

As noted in Chapter 4, the devolution policy initiated by the central government of Ghana was a strategy to involve other institutions and organizations as partners to provide resources for education. Most of the participants endorsed the policy of involving the local people in education. Administrative structures, including the district assemblies, and the appointment of district directors of education, were put in place to implement the policy. Wide publicity was undertaken to the extent that "devolution" and "decentralization" often used interchangeably, have become household terms. However, participants' views suggest that the intended benefits associated with the policy are far from being realized. The expectation was that more resources would be generated as a result of transferring power to the local administrators. Participants observed that since the introduction of the policy in 1987, it had largely remained paper work.

Participants expressed concern about the operations of the policy at the regional and district levels. Perceptions of participants indicated that power still largely resided in Accra. Financial administration was still centralized in Accra. The policy of composite budgeting that might have allowed local authorities some control in determining their financial needs had not taken off. Therefore, the community has the tendency of looking up to the central government for resources. District assemblies continued to expect the bulk of their revenues from the government. Even ceded revenues supposed to be collected and used at the district level were paid into the Consolidated Fund (national revenue) before re-allocations were made to the districts.

There was dissatisfaction on the part of local officers in on the curtailment of their authority to mobilize resources at lower levels of administration -- regional, district, and school. Regional directors as liaison officers between the Ministry of Education and district directors of education, however, appeared to be satisfied with their roles under the new system. Although the Director-General of the Ghana Education Service had demarcated the functions between the regional and district directorates, the division of decision-making authority between the two directorates were still unclear. District directors were still responsible to the Ministry of Education. At the same time they were accountable to the district assemblies. They were officers who distributed government supplies such as textbooks to the schools. Heads of senior secondary schools, in collaboration with their board of governors, seemed to have some control in the use of funds. Heads of primary and junior secondary schools did not have much authority to determine what resources their schools needed. They therefore continued to look up to what the central government would supply, apart from what they were able to decide with their PTAs. Therefore, the policy did not have much impact on resource mobilization of resources as intended.

In summary, the policy of decentralization, initiated by the central government, was endorsed by administrators at all governmental levels as result of a wide publicity undertaken by the government itself. The intended benefits such as generating more resources for national development have, however, not been realized. Financial decisions regarding projects and services for the communities were still made centrally. In education the division of functions of the regional and district directorates were still largely unclear. Although district directors were supposed to be heads of the education districts, they were still responsible to the regional directors and district assemblies for many educational decisions. The overall result is that the communities still look up to the central government for many educational resources.

2. *How are decisions affecting educational resources made -- between the central government and the local communities? Who decides on what?*

The primary goal of the devolution policy was to empower the local communities, led by the district assemblies, to exercise power in the determination of their own priorities. Participants at the local level did not have much authority in decision-making. Inasmuch as financial decisions were still centralized, directors and school heads noted that many decisions are still made at the headquarters. Senior civil servants at the headquarters regarded the new policy as a threat because it might reduce their power, privileges and prestige. They continued to cling to decision-making authority.

Decisions on school fees and learning materials, for example, are all centrally made, although district assemblies were supposed to be the highest decision-making body in the district. The assemblies had authority to make decisions affecting the district, but it was not clear how such authority was being exercised. Many participants did not feel the influence of the assemblies at all. District and school authorities noted that their role was simply to implement those decisions. Directors could transfer and post teachers to schools, but could not suspend or dismiss them. The authority to dismiss teachers had been left with the headquarters. District directors could also impose some levies on school children, but only with the approval of the district assemblies.

School heads expressed concern on their decision-making authority. For example, some heads felt the need to effect discipline on inefficient teachers, but could not do so, a situation that affected school effectiveness. However, a director at the headquarters argued that heads were vested with power to do a number of things including teacher discipline. School heads could take decisions in collaboration with their school's PTAs, but such decisions were subject to the approval of the district director. The director's decision whether to approve or not also depended on whether the decisions were consistent with the Ministry of Education's policies. Overall, educational decision-making authority lay outside those directly involved with education at the district level under the devolution policy.

In summary, although decision-making authority was supposed to have been conferred on local administrators, these administrators did not have the decision-making authority. Senior civil servants at the national headquarters perceived the devolution of decision-making authority as a threat to their influence, privileges and prestige. Therefore virtually all educational decisions were made at the headquarters. It was also not clear how the district assemblies exercised their authority as outlined in PNDC Law 207. Directors at the Ministry of Education indicated that school heads had been vested with the authority to make and implement school decisions. School heads, however, felt that they did not have such authority to deal with school matters, for example, teacher indiscipline.

3. *What are the major items of expenditure in the provision of basic and secondary education? Between the central government and the local communities, who provides what?*

In the provision of basic and secondary education, the largest item of expenditure has been the payment of salaries of all personnel hired in public education. The government has assumed full responsibility for this item. Tuition in all public schools has therefore been free. As noted in the data presented in chapter 4, in the 1994 fiscal year, for example, the education sector was allocated over 40 percent of the total national budget. Of this amount, not less than 80 percent was utilized in paying salaries. Yet, in the assessment of the government's role, it is quite easy to focus on the other material resources, forgetting about salaries, and thus asking for more resources from the central government. This expectation has led communities to underestimate government's provisions and thus expect more from the government rather than making local efforts to complement the government's efforts.

Apart from salaries, other major items of expenditure are educational infrastructure including school buildings, workshops, libraries, and staff accommodation. The provision of these resources has been a source of debate between the central government and the communities. Directors indicated that it is the communities' responsibility to provide the building plant for the government to take over and run the school. However, the community awareness about their responsibilities has not developed. Hence, communities continue to expect the government to provide these structures. As one director observed, it is not the responsibility of the government to provide schools. School heads, for example, are expected to provide some leadership in communities which have no schools to start one. The government has shown concern about the inability of some communities to provide schools. Hence, PAMSCAD (Program of Action to Mitigate the Social Cost of Adjustment) has been introduced to help the communities to complete educational projects.

Other items of expenditure are textbooks, tools and equipment. Under the government's own policy of free supply of textbook and tools, these materials are supplied free to all schools. However, a major problem encountered is the inadequacy of such supplies and the fact that the supplies have been highly irregular. Therefore, many respondents were of the view that users should be called upon to help provide these materials, especially since many parents are prepared to buy them for their children. An obstacle, however, is that the books are not in the open market.

In summary, the largest item of educational expenditure is salaries for which the government has assumed full responsibility. For example, the government allocated 40 percent of the 1994 national budget to education. Out of this allocation, 80 percent was taken by salaries alone. Thus only 20 percent was left for capital expenditure, giving the impression that the government was not providing adequately for education. Major items of capital expenditure was educational infrastructure. Other items were textbooks and books, all supplied by the government. The communities had a responsibility for providing a bulk of the educational infrastructure, but they have not been able to do so and continue to expect provisions from the government. Since the government is unable to shoulder all these responsibilities, there have been shortages of educational resources.

4. What are the factors affecting resource flow to basic and secondary education?

In describing the flow of resources for educational programs, directors and school heads portrayed different situations in their respective districts and schools in the previous five years. The different situations were that resource flow had improved, had remained constant, had been fluctuating, or had been deteriorating. Compare these situations to the fact that the government's total allocation to education had been rising over the years. Therefore, there is a need to examine the current efforts in order to identify what works and what does not.

A number of factors giving rise to the different situations were identified in the study. The first factor relates to the general economic constraints facing the government as the major provider. Funds allocated to one school could be diverted for another purpose thus curtailing flow to one school and increasing another. The reason was not clear.

Second, the government's economic policies and the district assemblies' expenditure patterns exert a negative impact on the communities. For example, in order to help the assemblies generate revenue for local development, the government introduced a policy that permitted the assemblies to collect taxes called "ceded" revenue for projects. But as Ofori (1992) observed, "even though ceded money is collected locally, it has to be returned to central government before being redistributed among local governments." This procedure gives the communities the impression that funds for development projects would be coming from the government rather than relying on their own sources. Moreover, as noted already, the assemblies spent a large proportion of their revenue on administrative expenses.

Third, poverty among the vast majority of the population affected their ability to contribute. However, it was also noted that poverty might not be as strong a factor as the peoples' commitment to and awareness of the purpose of education. If poverty was the only factor, then parents many of whose economic situation was not much different from other citizens could not effectively maintain their schools. The commitment on the part of PTAs, for example, has been one important factor in the flow of resources to schools. Therefore, commitment to education is a strong factor.

Fourth, the building of strong partnerships is an important factor that would motivate partners to pull resources together. Yet, as one headquarters director pointed out, "everyone seems to be working in his own interest." Under the current administrative structures, it is hard for the various institutions to see themselves as true partners with the common goal of achieving comprehensive and qualitative education. Duplication of functions, for example, is a source of waste of resources.

Finally, the policy of privatization encourages private individuals and organizations to provide education. Although a number of criticisms have been levelled against private institutions, their contribution to education is an important factor to consider. Wealthy citizens and others who subscribe to the notion that private schools offer quality education, including even some of those who control public schools, continue to patronize private schools.

In summary, five major factors were identified as affecting the resource flow to basic and secondary education. These are (1) general economic constraints are a major obstacle facing the government as a major provider of education; (2) the government's economic policies and the district assemblies' expenditure patterns have a negative impact on the communities; (3) poverty and lack of commitment on the part of community members affect their ability to contribute to education; (4) there are no partnerships among the various partners that have stake in education; (5) the policy of privatization encourages private individuals and organizations to provide education.

5. *If local communities are expected to contribute financially towards education, what percentage of the education budget can be borne by them?*

The national policy on education had made the provision of basic and secondary education a primary responsibility of the central government for decades, and all participants supported this policy. However, in view of the popular notion that the government can no longer bear that responsibility alone, how much of the burden should be transferred to the communities as beneficiaries of education? Opinions were divided on percentage sharing. Respondents' suggestion about the government's share ranged between 50 to 100 percent. Consider the following argument made by one respondent:

> I don't believe in talking about absolute percentages. It depends on the circumstance. Ideally basic level education is the responsibility of the community. So that the community should bear 100 percent of the cost at that level. It is community-based and so the local community should pay a greater percentage. But in a situation where the central government seems to be funding the entire 100 percent, we will then have the central government dictating the curriculum and whatever.

Analyses of the issues indicate that it is not feasible to describe each partner's contributions in absolute percentage terms. However, most respondents suggested that the government is expected to continue to bear a greater percentage. The invitation to the communities to share in the cost of education seems to receive their acceptance. While it seemed clear to many participants that the government faces constraints, their preference is that the government would bear a greater percentage of the education finances. One strategy for the government to contribute more is to ensure efficiency in the use of funds. For example, the government continues to receive support from non-traditional sources such as foreign agencies to increase its contribution. However, if the loaned funds and grants are not efficiently utilized, they would not make the expected impact.

The communities need civic education and motivation to be able to contribute. As one director observed, at the initial stage of the reforms, members of the community became highly enthused about what they could offer. In course of time when this enthusiasm waned, communities' contribution also waned.

In summary, the provision of basic and secondary education is a primary responsibility of the central government. The government, however, is unable to shoulder that responsibility adequately, suggesting that the responsibility should be shared with the communities. How much of that responsibility to be borne by the communities is, however, debatable. Thus far, it has not been possible to assess each partner's contribution in absolute terms. To improve the situation, efficiency in the use of government's funds is necessary, and the communities need more education to show more commitment to the provision of resources.

6. *What contributions are the various partners currently making to education?*

Partners identified as contributing resources to supplement government's provisions are the district assemblies, local communities, parent-teacher associations, individual schools, foreign agencies (loans and grants), and private individuals and organizations. The central government, as previously noted, provides the bulk of the resources. Since these provisions are limited, they cannot reach every child in every school. Through various strategies other partners are assisting.

In terms of value of the resources, the next major contributor should be the district assemblies. They have the machinery and the power to generate resources, yet their contributions seem to be even less in value than what the PTAs are able to do. Through the collection of various local taxes and the imposition of local levies, the assemblies provide help in the form of constructing workshops, making repairs to school buildings, and awarding a limited number of bursaries to students. In the perceptions of respondents, however, the assemblies' efforts have not had much impact on the communities, and most participants commented negatively on their efforts, as noted from the comments of one district director:

> They are looking out for what the government can do for them, not what they can do for the country. So we rather have to start from the grassroots and educate them to know their responsibilities so that they can mobilize resources at their level, and then appeal to the government to assist.

The assemblies' contribution to social development is evident from the observation that they utilize 85 percent of their revenue on administrative expenses and 15 percent on community development. They also continue to look up to the government for bulk of its funds.

Through the initiatives of the assemblies, members of the community offer assistance through the provision and preparation of land for school buildings, voluntary contributions, and providing communal labour on school projects. Members of the communities need education to make them aware of their civic responsibilities. The comments made suggest that such education could motivate them to make active contributions.

Parent-teacher associations make constant provisions ranging from learning materials to putting up buildings. Concerned with individual schools, they appear to be the next major partner to the government in education. Through self-imposed levies, PTAs exhibit strong commitment to the success of their schools. It is usually parents' responsibility to make contributions as may be agreed upon at their meetings. Then it becomes an obligation on each parent to make such contribution. Teachers do not normally make monetary or material contributions.

While various forms of assistance are being provided to schools by organizations outside the school, individual schools make some efforts on their own for additional resources. These efforts take the form of fund raising activities. Individual schools undertake different types of school labour including farming, and sand and stone carrying. These activities do not receive official support, and some parents view them as time wasting. Nonetheless, various schools continue to undertake such activities to raise additional funds for their own use.

The total funds realized from the joint efforts of local organizations are not adequate to meet educational needs of the country. Therefore, efforts are made to solicit for additional help from external sources. These sources are foreign agencies including the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, the African Development Bank, and Overseas Development Agency.

The assistance takes the form of loans or non-refundable grants. These organizations in specific educational projects related to primary, junior and senior secondary education.

In summary, various partners contributing resources are the district assemblies, local communities, parent-teacher associations, individual schools, foreign agencies (loans and grants), and private individuals and organizations. The central government provides the bulk of the resources. The government's provisions are, however, limited. Through various strategies other partners are assisting. The assemblies help in the provision of school buildings and workshops and bursaries. The PTAs provide assistance of various types to their respective schools. The communities provide assistance in the form of labour and levies. International organizations such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, the African Development Bank, and Overseas Development Agency are also providing loans and grants.

7. *What are some of the strategies to increase resources for basic and secondary education?*

Respondents were asked to comment on a number of strategies that could be adopted to improve the resource base for pre-university education. The various approaches on which participants commented were the feasibility of increasing user fees, the establishment of district endowment fund, and a loan scheme. In addition, participants referred to a number of issues that when effectively addressed could also improve the resource base. These were issues of accountability of spending officers, cost-effectiveness of education, weaknesses in financial practices, welfare services, and the distribution of schools among the communities.

Tuition in primary, junior and senior secondary schools is free. In addition, the government supplies free textbooks, tools and equipment. Students pay what is observed as token fees towards the purchase of these learning materials. An increase in the token fees might therefore be a possible option to adopt. The overall notion was that although user fees at their current level were low, asking users to pay more towards the purchase of learning materials is not a viable option to pursue. The option, it was suggested, would compel some parents to withdraw their children from school and thus defeat the government's goal of achieving free and compulsory education for all.

A district endowment or education fund to generate additional funds was suggested as a better option. Logistics for the fund would have to be carefully worked out to enable all citizens to contribute conveniently into the funds. Such contributions should also not be tied to the school child so as to create an extra burden for the parent. In particular, business concerns that use manpower from education should be encouraged to contribute into the fund. Use of such fund should benefit all schools in the district.

A suggestion was made during the interviews regarding the establishment of a loan scheme that would assist parents to pay for their children's second cycle education. Although the scheme might seem as a relief for parents, and some parents might opt for it, it would ultimately create more problems than it might be able to solve. It would create more burden for the government when it came to repayment since beneficiaries would only pay a fraction of the interest. The bulk of the interest would have to be borne by the government. The loan repayment might, in fact, be a burden on the parents in the event that the student drops out of school, or does not get job to do. The suggestion therefore, was that the loan scheme should be reserved for university education only.

Another concern expressed by some respondents was the issue of accountability on the part of spending officers. Accountability is related to the efficient use of resources to derive maximum benefits from educational funds from all sources. Heads of districts and schools said funds allocated to education were judiciously used. PTAs, for example, were very responsible in the use of funds to undertake school projects. Several directors said they did not know of any misuse of funds in their districts. Other respondents indicated, however, that some school heads did not live up to expectation in the use of school funds such as fees.

The study also sought to identify weaknesses in the administration and use of educational resources. Senior education personnel expressed concern about financial decisions still being centralized at the headquarters under the devolution policy. The process slowed down implementation of crucial decisions. With the exception of the district assemblies, many local authorities were not in a position to initiate development projects related to education. Even the assemblies who were supposed to have been vested with power to initiate projects looked up to the government for funds to implement many of its decisions. In spite of efforts to generate funds, the system faced acute shortage of funds. Educational projects were therefore underfunded. Funds were also not released early enough to undertake educational functions. The collection of the approved fees in secondary schools was a problem for many heads. Embezzlement and misapplication of funds by school officers such as accountants were observed as a serious weakness in the administration of finance.

Another weakness inherent in the system was cost-effectiveness of education as a whole. Some achievements had been made, but were not adequate considering the amount of human and material investment made. Salaries for education personnel, for example, was one huge item of expenditure. Yet the observation was that education personnel were not putting in maximum efforts to justify the huge expenses made in hiring their services. A major cause was weak supervision of teachers. Private schools seemed to achieve better returns for the investments they make because of strong supervision. Partly as a result of ineffective teaching, graduates pass out of school without the requisite skills, although other factors such as lack of teaching materials is an important factor.

The inadequate provision of welfare services for staff and students interfere with the smooth running of schools. The need for medical services, student catering services while at school, and means of transport for staff and students have significant impact on teaching and learning. These services are being provided up to some extent. However, they seem to be provided on an ad hoc basis. If decision-making authority is effectively transferred to the school-based authorities, it would be their primary responsibility to plan the means of providing these services.

The national goal of free and compulsory education makes it incumbent on policy makers to ensure that there is an equitable distribution of schools among the communities. Under the current processes by which funds are provided primarily by the government, the communities continue to look up to the government for all educational resources including schools. The lack of schools, particularly senior secondary schools, undermines the goal of comprehensive education. Therefore, efforts on the part of the communities, supported by the government are required in the opening of senior secondary schools in all communities.

In summary, a number of strategies could be adopted to increase resources. There is a need to ensure accountability in the use of funds, ensure cost-effectiveness of education, remove all weaknesses in financial practices, and ensure that schools are provided in all communities. The establishment of a district endowment is a viable option. Local administrators should be vested with the decision-making authority so that they could make and implement financial decisions and be accountable to such decisions.

8. *What have been the outcomes of the efforts made at providing more resources for education?*

The primary goal of the reform program introduced under the devolution policy of 1987 was to improve the quality of education. Therefore one goal of the study was to assess the outcomes of the measures introduced under the reform program. Three major aspects were used as the basis for the assessment. These were (1) the curriculum for basic and secondary education, (2) the implementation of the program, and (3) employment prospects for secondary school graduates.

One concern related to the assessment of the reform program was improvement in the utilization of resources, and whether such resources had, in fact, increased. Data presented in Chapter 7 showed that not much improvement had been made in the provision of resources for education. There were acute shortage of learning materials of all types. Qualified teachers were lacking. Within this background, the new curricula introduced in primary, junior, and senior secondary schools were assessed.

The Curriculum

The curriculum embraced various subject areas including general arts, science, language arts, mathematics, technical drawing, life skills and quantitative and verbal aptitudes. Altogether, participants noted that there were 13 individual subjects out of which only French language was an elective. New or revised syllabuses were designed for all these subjects.

Participants expressed deep concern that the scope of the curriculum was too wide considering the low age of the children ranging between 10 and 13 years. The greatest concern was that there were not adequate trained teachers to handle the subjects effectively. Where there were qualified teachers, lack of prescribed textbooks, tools and equipment, and workshops posed as a serious handicap to teaching and learning. In addition, there were no incentives to attract qualified teachers to stay in schools, especially those in remote areas. As a result of lack of tools and equipment, the number of trades were limited in each school. These trades included carpentry, masonry, leatherwork, electronics, and automobile repair. Therefore, students were compelled to choose a trade in which they might not have strong aptitude. Some respondents attributed these unhappy developments to poor initial planning.

Implementation of the program

The scope of the curriculum and some of its attendant obstacles have been noted in the previous section. Another major concern expressed by respondents was that the new program started at the middle level instead of laying a strong foundation in grade 1. Although a director at the national headquarters strongly argued against this notion, many heads of secondary schools insisted that the program did not begin at primary grade 1. It was therefore not clear at what level the new program took off. Whether the program took off at the mid-point or at the foundation level, what became evident was that students had not acquired the level of knowledge to enable them take the final examination successfully. Based on the university entrance requirements, a much small percentage of senior secondary school candidates (about 1000 out of 42,000) passed the final examinations. Others could, however, qualify for entry to other post-secondary institutions.

A major cause of candidates' weak performance was that the nine subjects taken at the final examination were too many. Moreover, there was lack of serious preparation towards the examination since in some schools, the required textbooks arrived only a few months before the examinations. Since it was a new program, teachers virtually did not know how to prepare students adequately for the final examinations.

Employment Prospects for Secondary School Graduates

The reform program also aimed at providing students with skills that would qualify them for jobs. It was observed that the new program supposed to emphasize practical skills was not much different from the old system that laid emphasis on book knowledge. Both systems were in operation, and so it was not easy to emphasize job skills. Considering the various problems encountered with the curriculum and its implementation as pointed out previously, it is not difficult to understand why secondary school graduates had not acquired good skills to enter the job market. It was, in fact, not clear whether students at the junior secondary schools were to be equipped with job skills or merely to be exposed to work tools.

However, whether students were to be equipped with job skills or get exposed to work tools, the point was that after completing secondary school, many students did not acquire any skill with which they could work. Further training was therefore necessary for them, but no such training program exist. Therefore, there is a gap between secondary school graduation and the job market.

Another expectation was that the curricular and how they were implemented would reflect the values held in the larger society. A director noted that the type of business held important in the society is an important indicator of what students will want to learn in school. In spite of all these notions, one director pointed out, it might be too early to make a fair assessment of the program. However, the fact that the Ministry of Education had suspended the opening of new senior secondary schools and had appointed a review committee to examine the entire reform program is an indication that the program had not progressed as intended.

In summary, the primary goal of the reform measures was to improve the quality of education, and three major aspects of the reform could be used as the basis of assessment of the quality of education. These aspects are the curriculum, implementation of the educational program and employment prospects for secondary school graduates. The curriculum was seen as too broad for students to learn effectively. Moreover, learning resources were not adequate. The implementation of the program was beset with obstacles. The general notion was that the implementation started from the middle of the school system instead of laying foundation at grade one. As a result, there were mass failures at the final examinations. Consequently, secondary school graduates were not equipped with the requisite skills to enter the job markets. Overall the reform program has not achieved the intended success.

9. *What issues are involved when the responsibility for providing funds is devolved to the local community?*

The funding of basic and secondary education in Ghana has been the primary responsibility of the Central Government for decades. At some stage, however, it became crystal clear that the government alone could not continue to bear effectively that responsibility. There was a need, therefore, to call on the beneficiaries of education to bear part of the cost involved in providing education. In this study it has become clear that the government has continued to bear greater part of the responsibility. The local communities have been expected to provide some funds to supplement the efforts of the government. This expectation implies the transfer of some of the responsibilities currently borne by the government. The transfer of funding responsibility involves a number of important issues.

First, transfer of funding responsibility involves the concomitant transfer of decision-making power. It is difficult to expect members of the local community to generate funds at their level when decision-making power continues to be held by bureaucrats at the national headquarters. And although top bureaucrats appeared to support the policy of decentralization, this support seemed to be in theory only. In practice they did not show sufficient commitment to the devolution of decision-making power. Therefore, one important issue in the provision of funds by the local communities is for the top administrators to demonstrate full commitment to the devolution of decision-making authority to local authorities.

Second, in the regional and district directorates, although functions had been clearly demarcated for example, by the Director General of the Ghana Education Service, there was still duplication of functions in the sense that some functions supposed to be performed at the district level were still being performed at the regional level. The notion that some district directors did not see their way clear affected their initiatives to generate new ideas including the raising and use of funds.

Third, although it was noted that schools were the basic decision-making unit, many heads were not comfortable with their decision-making authority under the devolution policy. And the issue is that they wanted the authority to be able to run their schools as effectively as they could. In undertaking fund raising activities, for example, they did not see their way clear to be able to generate as much funds as they could.

Fourth, the district assemblies, as the highest decision-making bodies at the district level, did not seem effective in managing the provision of social services. In their case, PNDC Law 207 had provided them with the legal backing they required. However, it seemed that the Central Government, through some of its own practices, seemed to interfere with the smooth running of the assemblies' operations. For example, it was pointed out that the "ceded" revenue intended to be used locally had to be paid to the government's chest before reimbursement. The issue is that once the assemblies have been provided with the legal backing to operate, there must be little or no interference from top administrators.

Finally, the transfer of the responsibility to generate funds for education and other social services requires the joint efforts of all identifiable institutions and organizations at the micro and macro levels. These bodies must form strong partnerships in which the role of each partner is duly recognized. In such partnerships, no partner should put any impediments in the way of other partners in their efforts to generate and manage educational funds.

10. Based on the analysis of participants' responses, what policy initiatives or alternatives could be proposed?

The study has touched upon many issues pertaining to the provision of basic and secondary education in Ghana. It is quite clear that there are strengths and opportunities in Ghana in the provision of education. Many structures costing billions of cedis have been designed to provide education at various levels. However, in spite of these structures, it is also clear that a number of weaknesses and threats in the system have prevented the attainment of national goals and objectives of education. Addressing these weaknesses and threats require a re-examination of current policies which direct the on-going practices. Accordingly a number of recommendations are made as policy initiatives and alternatives.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the study findings, the interpretations, and the conclusions made, the following recommendations are made with a view to addressing some of the weaknesses identified in the mobilization and use of educational resources:

1. The government should seriously consider to put in place what it takes to obtain the full commitment of its civil servants to an effective devolution policy. The devolution policy initiated by the central government as a strategy to involve the local communities and other non-governmental organizations in the provision of social services is not being implemented as planned. The Ministry of Finance is highly centralized, and the impression is that unless local officers consult the headquarters, nothing really gets done. The policy appears to be on paper only, and functions supposed to have been transferred to the district levels are still being performed at the headquarters and partly at the regional levels. The required authority to make financial decisions that might result in increased resource mobilization, is still held by senior civil servants at the centre. Therefore, local officers and citizens have the tendency of looking up to the government for social amenities. These issues present impediments to the decentralization policy, and serious efforts should be made to reverse these trends. In particular, officers at the national headquarters are required to show commitment to the policy implementation.

2. There is an urgent need for efficiency in the use of funds. The huge expenses made by the central government have not produced the expected educational returns. Education programs are taking about 200 percent of the resources that could be reasonably required to accomplish what is being done now. This amounts to waste of scarce resources which must be eliminated or at least brought under control. If the decentralization policy causes redundancy in some offices, the officers affected should be relocated to other areas of work. For example, the education offices are overstaffed with highly qualified and experienced teachers while the classrooms experience shortage of such teachers. The Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education would, therefore, need to re-examine and possibly reverse the trend of moving newly promoted teachers from the classroom to the offices. Promoted teachers may be more effective in the classroom.

3. Local authorities should be proactive in their advocacy for power transfer and partnership in decision-making, if power supposed to have been transferred to them still resides at the centre. At the community level, the non-transference of decision-making power to the district offices means that local administrators have not assumed full

responsibility in the mobilization of resources for education and other social services, and the notion is that they want to assume such responsibility. The overall impact is that there has not been much increase in educational infrastructure as envisaged in the policy. This situation, if it persists, will continue to deprive the local communities of the essential services and amenities they could obtain through their own efforts. Local management power belongs to them, and if they perceive any "usurpation of power," they have to claim it as an act of empowerment. This power claim may be channeled through the organizations such as the Sub-Committees of the District Assemblies, Town/Village Development Committees, Conference of District Directors of Education, Conference of the Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools, Board of Governors, the Local Committees of the Ghana National Association of Teachers, Parent-Teacher Associations, School Advisory Councils, etc.

4. The Ministries of Finance and Education should examine their current policies to motivate other partners to make real efforts to contribute towards education and other social services. The central government has assumed a major responsibility of providing for education. It has made appreciable efforts to provide education currently to the tune of over 40 percent of the national budget. Its resources now seem to have been stretched to a stage where they cannot be stretched further, because it has to cater for other sector ministries as well. Yet the expectation is that it could still provide more. The option now is to provide more or set other partners in motion to provide more. As well, the implementation of the policy of composite budgeting need to be reactivated to enable the Ministry of Finance to release government grants in bulk to the districts as and when required.

5. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service, should design a policy recognizing the role of all notable organizations, as a way of motivating them to kindle their present development efforts. The various partners, including the district assemblies, community members, parent-teacher associations, individual schools, foreign agencies, and private individuals and organizations were all contributing towards education. These groups seem to be working independently. The building of strong partnerships is likely to motivate individual partners to put in more efforts.

6. Action should be expedited on the opening of more schools so as to consider those communities who do not have schools, and who may be located far from the nearest school. In the school districts there is inequality in the supply of schools, particularly senior secondary schools and learning materials have been inadequate. The government

has placed an embargo on the opening of new schools to concentrate all efforts to improving the existing ones. This is a right decision, but should not remain too long.

7. The assemblies, as elected representatives, should examine their social programs, set up new priorities with regard to local development, and take more effective measures to implement them. The district assemblies, as the next major contributor of social services, have performed much below expectation. They have provided some assistance to some communities, but overall, they seem to have made very little impact on the communities as a whole. They raise local revenue and receive grants from the central government as additional revenue to provide services, but these services have received little attention. As well the expected leadership to encourage individual citizens to help has not been forthcoming. These are setbacks in the implementation of the new programs and must be addressed.

8. Further efforts should be made to increase education funds. Increasing textbook user fees or a loan scheme for second cycle education are not viable options, but the establishment of a district or school endowment fund not tied to the school child is a good strategy to consider. The establishment of such fund should not be the responsibility of the Central Government, but the districts or the individual schools. The assemblies and district directors working closely with school heads should initiate action to establish such a Fund. As a matter of policy, school heads should make extra efforts in fund raising without jeopardizing students' academic work. Each school could establish strong bonds with old students associations, business houses and philanthropic individuals as friends and adoption agencies of the school. The responsibility for each school is to ask and talk about money whenever the situation avails itself to make more money.

9. School heads and their accountants should demonstrate accountability as an important factor in the use of school funds. A number of weaknesses were identified in use of resources. Centralization of financial decisions and insufficient funds have been pointed out. Fee collection in school poses a serious challenge to school authorities. District directors and school heads noted that funds had been put to use effectively, but other directors and school heads referred to instances of embezzlement and misapplication that occurred when heads were compelled to utilize funds meant for some particular items had not been released. Private schools by the nature of their set-up appear to show better accountability. In a period of scare resources the need to account for every *cedi* that is earmarked for education is absolutely essential. Internal and external auditors have important roles to ensure that financial lapses are eliminated.

10. The Social Committees of the district assemblies should provide effective leadership in community educational programs and the establishment of an Education Fund in the districts. The quality of educational programs under the new system has been much below expectation. The curriculum has been much broader than teachers and students can cope with. As a result, examination results have been poor. The skills that students are expected to acquire have eluded them. School graduates can hardly fit into any jobs. There is also a gap in their training. Communities should be responsible in establishing training programs for those who pass out from the system. Through the PAMSCAD, the government can give some support to these programs, and the district assemblies have important roles to play in such programs.

In the analysis and interpretation of the data some issues remained unanswered. Five of these unanswered questions have been identified as areas of potential research.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. The first issue that confronted the study at several stages was that of commitment on the part of those expected to implement the devolution policy. The policy makers formulate laws to guide various activities at various levels. Once a policy has passed as a law, the responsibility for implementing the policy becomes that of public servants. However, a major bottleneck in the policy implementation is the dragging of feet by the implementors. It was concluded in the study that lack of commitment on the part of public servants is one major cause of such feet dragging. It was also observed that previous attempts made to effect decentralization policy did not succeed largely because of public servant's non-commitment to the success of the policy. It became evident in this study that public officers feared loss of power, prestige and privileges when power was taken away from them. What are the issues involved in eliminating such fears that block effective policy implementation considered to be in the supreme interest of the people? This is an issue that lends itself to further research.

2. It also became evident that several foreign non-government organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were making significant contributions to the educational reform program in Ghana. Some of these foreign organizations dictated certain conditions under which they would provide assistance to the country. For example, one director noted that the Ministry of Education was not happy when local authorities imposed education levies on members of the communities. According to the director, such levy imposition was at variance with some of the conditions imposed by these foreign agencies. Foreign types of assistance are obviously welcome, and are even solicited. However, the point noted was that some of their conditions are

likely to work against local initiatives at mobilizing their own resources. What then are the conditions under which foreign agencies provide assistance to poor countries? How appropriate are these conditions? What impact do these conditions have on the government and local initiatives? The issue of the impact of foreign assistance to Ghana is an area for further research.

3. Placement of secondary school graduates is currently a major concern. As already pointed out, a major goal of the new secondary school program was to equip the graduates with skills to enter the employment market, whether public or self-established employment. Some respondents noted that a few of the graduates have entered the job market and are making good progress. It is not clear what other graduates who form the majority are doing. What has been the impact of the secondary school program on the placement of secondary school graduates?

4. An issue closely related to secondary school graduate job placement is the lack of further training program for these graduates. While the reform program purports to equip students with the requisite job skills, the structure of the programs as currently designed does not lead to the attainment of the job objective. The lack of institutions for further training has created a great gap between secondary education and employment for most graduates. The suggestion to increase the duration of secondary education by even one year was rejected by the Ministry of Education with the reason that it would prolong the duration which was unduly long in the previous system, and had to be reduced as one of the new reform measures. To add another year would mean going back to the old system. It might also mean an increased educational burden because the government would have to find the resources for such training programs. Yet, the gap created by the new structure must be closed. What appropriate strategies could be taken to eliminate this gap without making secondary education unduly long, and not imposing further educational burden on the government and other partners? Could employers and other private organization offer any assistance? The introduction of further training programs for secondary school graduates calls for further research.

5. The need to build partnerships among the various bodies providing education has been touted in this study as one strategy to increase resources. Partnerships should embrace the government, the district assemblies, local communities, parent-teacher associations, non-government organizations, and private individuals and organizations. In the current situation, partners seem to be working independently of each other. While they all have a common goal, every organization appears to be working in its own interest. The question arising from this partnership proposal is, what social education could be adopted

to break the existing barriers in favour of strong partnerships in the provision of educational resources?

These recommendations are made with the hope that they will stimulate new thinking about the sharing of educational responsibilities among stakeholders so that higher quality education might be provided to the rising generation.

Epilogue

One major concern triggered off this study -- that the educational administrator would obtain an unimpeded access to the required resources that would facilitate the educator's job so that the highest quality education is achieved. In the educational institution the administrator does not undertake the job of educating. The administrator's role is to facilitate the job of educating, ensure that those assigned to do the job have all that they require to accomplish it effectively and efficiently, and that they achieve the maximum results attainable with the resources obtained. How can these be achieved?

Modern society accepting the responsibility of educating its rising generations has attempted to find the required resources to discharge this responsibility. Such resources most often, and as found in this study, have not been adequate to undertake the job; not even in the wealthier societies. Lack of adequate resources for education, of course, makes the educational administrator's task an uphill one. While resources may never be adequate, there are ways to obtain more of them to facilitate the task of the administrator and the educator. The task of undertaking this study seemed to be more rewarding in a system that has less resources than in one that appeared more wealthy. Hence, this study was undertaken in Ghana, a developing country. The literature review that partly focused on the current practices in developing countries provided more insight into the problem.

The provision of education in Ghana, like other developing countries, has been constrained by shortage of resources, and it is very encouraging to observe that policy makers, planners, analysts, administrators, and educators have recognized the enormity of the problem. The efforts being made, the partners engaged in such efforts, the policies adopted in making these efforts, the problems encountered, and their outcomes have been the subject for this study.

One goal of the findings in this study is to stimulate fresh thoughts among various stakeholder groups in education. In this way they might make a joint effort in providing the resources for quality education that seems hard to attain because adequate resources continue to elude all of us. Levin and Young (1994) have put stakeholders of education into two categories: *external* and *internal*. Internal stakeholders include associations of elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, school trustees, school principals, school district superintendents; support staff including unions of secretaries, bus drivers, maintenance and caretaking personnel; parents and community groups; and students. External stakeholders include business groups, peace organizations, child welfare organizations, taxpayer groups, and the media. The list suggests that education is a responsibility that leaves no one out. In finding the resources for education, however, the responsibility, lies first with internal stakeholders who would be expected to provide the leadership role and examples to encourage external stakeholders to provide their share of the responsibility. In this way the joint efforts of all groups might be enough to complement whatever the central government, as the major provider, might be able to provide.

The expectation is that no one stakeholder group will place impediments in the efforts of the other group. It is also expected that all partners would be welded into one strong partnership with a common means towards a common goal. This goal is achievable, and must be achieved to the highest extent possible.

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APPENDICES

iepa UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA
Tel.: 2440-9
Cables: "UNIVERSITY"
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

Your Ref. Our Ref. EP/45/129 Date 26th November, 1993

Director-General
G.E.S.
P. O. Box M.45
ACCRA

ATTEN:

S.F. Oppong (Mrs.)
Acting Director
Basic Education Division

SUPERVISION OF FIELD WORK OF
MR. JOSEPH OSAPAH MANKOE

I write in response to your letter No. EP.2765/61 of November 24, 1993 on the above topic and wish to express my thanks to you for identifying me to supervise Mr Joseph Osapah Mankoe's work when he proceeds to Ghana to undertake his field study.

I wish to inform you that I am prepared to supervise Mr. Mankoe's work.

J. S. K. OWUSU (DR.)
AG. DIRECTOR

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted.

My Ref. No. EP-2765/67

Your Ref. No.

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

HEADQUARTERS
Ministry Branch Post Office
P.O. Box M.45
Accra

6th December 1993

THE SECRETARY,
FSIDA,
222 CAMPUS TOWER,
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA,
EDMONTON, AB CANADA.

SPONSORSHIP OF RESEARCH WORK
MR. JOSEPH OSAPAH MANKOE

The Basic Education Division of the Ghana Education Service has undertaken to sponsor the field work of Mr. Joseph Osapah Mankoe, who is currently following a doctoral programme in the University of Alberta, Canada.

Mr. Mankoe's area of research is of immense importance and relevance to current efforts in Educational Planning and Administration in Ghana. There is an on-going education reform, started in 1987, which places a very high premium on community involvement in the administration and financial support for Basic Education Schools. A research in this area therefore is very welcome.

The Ghana Education Service will give Mr. Mankoe access to educational districts, schools and give him the necessary professional and administrative advice in relation to his work while in Ghana. Since Dr. J. S. K. Owusu, the supervisor, is at Cape Coast University, we suggest that Cape Coast District will be the study base from where Mr. Mankoe can visit other districts.

A copy of Dr. Owusu's acceptance letter is attached for your information.

We highly recommend that Mr. Mankoe is adequately funded for his research work.

Thank you.

Opong
S. F. OPONG (MRS.)
ACTING DIRECTOR
(BASIC EDUCATION DIVISION)
for. DIRECTOR-GENERAL

cc: DR. KEN WARD,
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA,
EDMONTON.

MR. JOSEPH OSAPAH MANKOE,
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA,
EDMONTON.

University of Alberta
Edmonton

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education

Canada T6G 2G5

7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 492-5241
Fax (403) 492-2024

December 28, 1993

Mrs. Sarah F. Oppong
Ag. Director
Basic Education Division
P. O. Box M.45
Accra
Ghana, West Africa

On behalf of my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Ken Ward and on my own behalf, I write to acknowledge receipt of the letter we requested to assist us in applying for some funding towards my doctoral research in Ghana. The required copies of the letter were all parcelled to me by my colleague and friend, Mr. Francis Koomson of Agona Swedru.

I wish to add that having waited for some months without any response from Ghana, I proposed and consulted Dr. Ward to do my research here on an alternate topic *The impact of a decentralized policy on the role performance of school administrators in Alberta* and began working on a new proposal and interviews towards that end.

Now that we have received such a nice response from you, I shall stick to the original topic *The Perceived Roles of the Central Government and Local Communities in Financing Education under a Devolution Policy in a Developing Country*.

We are now going to set the date for my candidacy examination which should be in January 1994 immediately after which we shall submit the research funding application. All other things being equal, I hope to be in Ghana some time in April 1994 for the field research.

Please accept our unqualified gratitude for acceding to our request, and we cherish the hope that the outcome of the research will not only be beneficial to Ghana's educational system, but to Canada as well. Thank you very much.

Joseph Osapah Mankoe

cc: Dr. Ken Ward, Doctoral Supervisor
Dept. of Ed. Administration, Univ of AB.

Dr. J. S. K. Owusu, Ag. Director
Institute of Ed. Planning & Admin., Cape Coast

Dr. N. K. Pecku, Principal
University College of Ed., Winneba

Mr. J. N. Aryeetey, Registrar
Univ. College of Education, Winneba

University of Alberta
Edmonton
Canada T6G 2G5

Department of Educational Administration
Faculty of Education
7-104 Education Building North, Telephone (403) 492-5241
Fax (403) 492-2024

May 10, 1994

To Whom It May Concern:

Mr. Joseph Mankoe, Student I.D. #890027, is enrolled as a full-time graduate student in the Doctor of Philosophy program in this Department.

He is travelling to Ghana for a period of approximately four months for the purpose of collecting data towards his doctoral thesis. He will return to this Department at the end of that time to continue graduate studies. Please extend to him any assistance he might require.

Sincerely yours,

Donald M Richards

D. M. Richards
Professor and
Graduate Coordinator

DMR/ms

Financing Pre-university Education Under a Devolution Policy in Ghana

INTERVIEW GUIDE 1

Policy Makers, Analysts, Planners, Educational Professionals, and Educational Administrators

1. Tell me about the operation of the decentralized school system in Ghana? How does it work with regard to school decision making, and the provision of educational resources (school buildings, furniture, texbooks, etc).

2. What are your views about community involvement in education? What part are the communities playing?

3. How can we ensure that all citizens are playing their part in the provision of education in your school district?

4. What is the current responsibility of the
   (i) central government,
   (ii the local community (citizens),
   (iii) individual schools, and
   (iv) parents, in providing education in this district?

5. What (if anything) should be removed from what we now pursue as basic education; secondary education to make them cost effective?

6. What (if anything) could be added to make them cost effective?

7. What percentage of the national annual budget has been committed to education in the last five years: 1989/90, 1990/91, 1991/92, 1992/93, and 1993/94 for:
   (i) Basic Education (primary and junior secondary)
   (ii) senior secondary? Do you think this amount is adequate?
   (iii) If yes, how do you justify that?
   (iv) If no, what explanation/s do you have?

8. Within these years have resources increased, decreased or remained constant?

9. What should be offered to our students in (i) basic education, (ii) secondary education in terms of curriculum and employment?

10. How should education at these levels be funded?

11. How do/should we assess the results of our education system to ensure high quality, effectiveness and efficiency?

12. Whose responsibility is it to provide programs not forming part of formal school education, e.g canteen, medical?

13. What percentage of educational funding is borne by the central government? How are the funds disbursed?

14. Who or what bodies are responsible for the remaining percentage?

15. What should be the funding priorities in education?

16. What suggestions do you have to ensure that school districts have reasonable access to equitable resources?

17. In your view, are we (Ghanaians) reaping adequate returns for the investments we have been making in education over the years? If yes, what are some evidence? If not, why not?

18. What measures would you recommend to ensure that the costs of education are reasonable and under control?

19. Do you accept the way by which resources are allocated to schools?

20. Are there some preferential treatments for some areas in educational financing?

21. Is the policy of free and compulsory education still in operation, and being enforced? How successful has the policy been over the years?

22. What is the quality of education as evidenced from the graduates who pass through the system?

23. Is there equitable distribution of (i) primary schools (ii) secondary schools throughout the country?

24. What factors affect equality of education, and the unavailability of schools in some areas? Are these being addressed?

25. What efforts are being made to attract people from the less advantaged areas and background?

26. What are the strengths and shortcomings of educational financial practices in Ghana?
[Providing access to people, equality of educational opportunities (in terms of people's ability), efficiency of the education system, wastage in the education system, meeting manpower needs of the country, administrative feasibility, quality of education, etc.]

27. How feasible do you think it would be to promote privatization of education as a strategy to meet the challenges posed by current educational constraints?
[Maintaining quality of education, administrative control, effect of providing equal educational opportunity to all, ceiling on fee-level, promoting efficiency, decreasing wastage, promoting dual system, etc.]

28. How feasible do you think it would be to raise the level of user fees in educational institutions? What suggestions do you have in that regard?

29. What do you think about the current student loan program for higher education in Ghana? Could this program be introduced at the lower levels, e.g. senior secondary?

30. Does foreign aid play any role in the provision of educational resources? If yes, what are they? How feasible are they?

31. Can we ensure that all levels of government and all citizens are playing their part in the provision of education in Ghana?

Financing Pre-university Education Under a Devolution Policy in Ghana

INTERVIEW GUIDE 2

Headmasters, Teachers, Parents, Community Leaders, and Citizens

1. Tell me about the operation of the decentralized school system in Ghana? How does it work with regard to school decision making, and the provision of educational resources (school buildings, furniture, textbooks, etc.).

2. What do you say about community involvement in education? What part are the communities playing?

3. How can we ensure that all citizens are playing their part in the provision of education in your school district?

4. What is the current responsibility of the
   (i) central government,
   (ii the local community (citizens),
   (iii) individual schools, and
   (iv) parents, in providing education in this district?

5. What (if anything) should be removed from what we now pursue as basic education; secondary education to make them cost effective?

6. What (if anything) could be added to make them cost effective [so that we dont't waste money]?

7. Within the last five years have resources to the district and the schools increased, decreased or remained constant?

8. What should be offered to our students in (i) basic education, (ii) secondary education in terms of curriculum and employment?

9. How should education at these levels be funded?

10. How do we assess the results of our education system to ensure high quality, effectiveness and efficiency?

11. Whose responsibility is it to provide programs not forming part of formal school education, e.g. transportation, canteen, medical?

12. What suggestions do you have to ensure that your school district has reasonable access to equitable resources?

13. What can we do to maximize the use of fiscal (monetary) resources?

14. Do you accept the way by which resources are allocated to your school?

15. Are there any strategies being adopted by the people to generate adequate financial resources to provide universal basic education? What role does the central government play?

16. How feasible do you think it would be to promote privatization of education as a strategy to meet the challenges posed by current educational constraints?

    [Maintaining quality of education, administrative control, effect of providing equal educational opportunity to all, ceiling on fee-level, promoting efficiency, decreasing wastage, promoting dual system, etc.]

17. How feasible do you think it would be to increase school fees in educational institutions [primary and secondary]? What suggestions do you have in that regard?

18. What do you think about the current student loan scheme for higher education in Ghana? What do you say about this scheme being introduced at the lower levels, e.g. senior secondary?

19. What role does foreign aid play in the provision of educational resources?